



THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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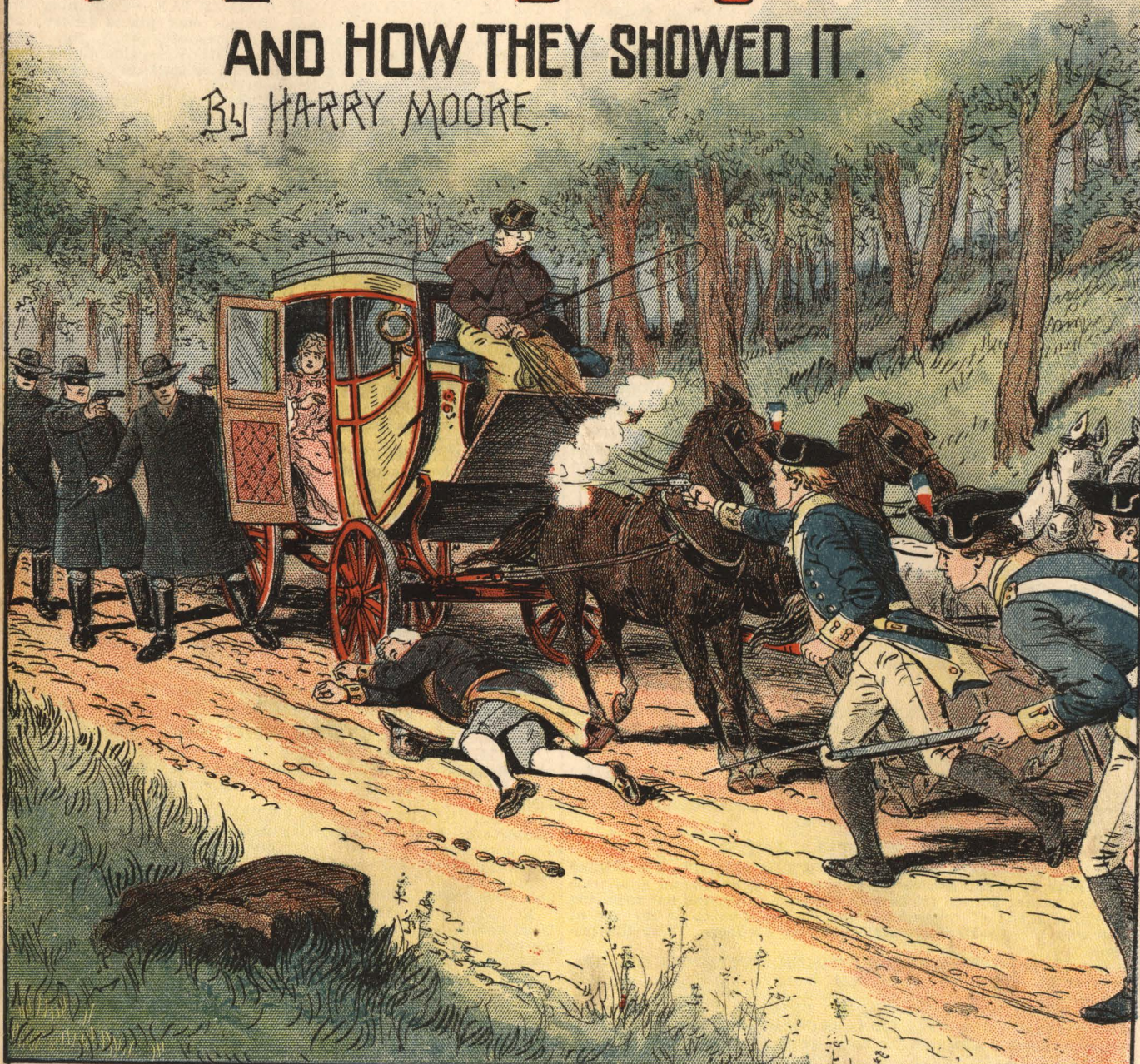
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CHAPTER I.

THE "LIBERTY BOYS" SET OUT.

"Orderly!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Send Dick Slater to me as soon as possible."

"Very well, sir."

It was the fall of 1778. General William Howe, with a force of patriot soldiers, was quartered at Savannah, in Georgia. With him at the time, just temporarily, was a company of young men known far and wide as "The Liberty Boys of '76." They had made themselves famous by their wonderful work on many fields of battle. Their names were synonymous with bravery and daring.

Their captain was a young man named Dick Slater. He, in addition to being the captain of the company, and a terrible fighter, was famous as a scout and spy. He had done more daring deeds than any other man in the patriot army—yes, more than any half dozen men.

He had been given the name of "The Champion Spy of the Revolution," and right nobly had he earned it.

It was this youth whom the orderly had been ordered to find and send to headquarters.

The orderly knew where the "Liberty Boys" headquarters was and he went there at once. Dick was there, and when told that General Howe wished to see him at headquarters he made his way there at once.

The general greeted Dick pleasantly.

"Take a seat," said General Howe, when he had shaken hands with the youth.

The "Liberty Boy" sat down and looked at the officer inquiringly.

"I suppose you are aware of the fact that the patriots living in the southern part of this State, near the border of Florida, are having a terrible time these days, Dick?"

"Yes, sir; at least, so I have heard reported."

"It is true. Parties of guerillas made up of Tory refugees, and aided frequently by the British regulars from

General Prevost's force at St. Augustine, come over into Georgia, onto the rice plantations, and burn, murder and pillage to their heart's content and carry off the negro slaves to sell again for their own benefit."

"That is what I have heard, sir."

"And added to this the Seminole Indians are on the warpath and often swoop down upon a defenseless settler and murder his family and burn his house."

"It is a very bad state of affairs, sir."

"So it is."

"Could it not be stopped?"

"That is just what I am thinking of trying to do."

"I wish that you may succeed, sir."

"I hope that I shall be able to put a partial stop to it, at any rate."

"Yes, indeed."

"In order to do that I am planning to make an attack on St. Augustine."

"That is a good idea, it seems to me."

"I think so; but in order to make a success of it I must have some information regarding the strength of the garrison there."

"So I should think."

"Yes; for the reason that while I want to take a sufficient number of men for the work, yet I do not wish to take more than is necessary."

"Certainly not."

"And if I can learn the number of men that General Prevost has, and find out the best way of reaching the place, and where to make the attack, it will simplify matters."

"Yes, indeed."

"And I have sent for you this morning, Dick, to ask if you will make the attempt to secure the information for me."

"Certainly I will!" was the prompt reply.

"I was sure you would be willing to do so."

"Yes, I shall be glad to do it."

"It will be dangerous work, Dick."

"I know that."

"But it doesn't have any effect in the way of discouraging you, eh?"

"No, indeed."

"I didn't think it would have; that is the reason I sent for you."

"I shall be glad to make the attempt to secure the information you wish, General Howe."

"And I am sure you will succeed."

"I will do my best."

"And that is better than any one else could do, for I know what you can do."

"I fear you think too highly of my abilities, sir," was the modest reply.

"No, that would be impossible."

"When shall I start on the expedition?" asked Dick, for he was a modest fellow and was always ill at ease when forced to listen to praise of himself.

"As soon as possible."

"To-day?"

"If you can get ready."

"I can do that easily enough. There is very little that I will have to do."

"Very well; go to-day, then."

"I will do so."

"Will you go alone?"

"I think that, with your permission, I will take my 'Liberty Boys' down as far as the border line. From there I will probably make the journey by myself."

"Very good; take them with you."

"I will do so; and thank you for permitting me to do so."

"That is all right; and now for the instructions."

General Howe talked to Dick for nearly an hour, telling him just what he wished done, and giving him all necessary instructions; and then the youth took his leave and returned to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys."

"What's in the wind, Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook, a handsome, jolly youth of about Dick's age—nineteen.

"Yes, what's up, Dick?" from Mark Morrison.

"Are we to have something to do?" queried Sam Sanderson.

Several of the others asked similar questions, and Dick looked smilingly around at them till they got through; then he said:

"Yes, there's something in the wind."

"What is it?"

"Are we to be sent somewhere?"

"Will we have some work to do?"

"I hope there will be some lively work, if any."

"Tell us about it, old man."

Such were a few of the exclamations.

"You want to know what is to be done?" smiled Dick.

"Yes, yes!" cried Bob, who was of an eager, impulsive temperament. "Tell us quickly or I shall be tempted to give you a good thrashing! I can't stand suspense."

"Supposing you were hanging at the end of a rope? You'd have to stand it, then."

"No, I wouldn't."

"What would you do?"

"I'd kick!"

There was a chorus of laughter at this, and, still smiling, Dick said:

"I am going on a scouting and spying expedition, boys."

"You are?"

"Just you?"

"I thought you said we were going somewhere?"

"Where are you going, Dick?"

"Down to St. Augustine."

"To St. Augustine?"

"Yes."

"What are you going down there for?"

"To spy on the British and find out how many men they have, and how strong the works are, and all about everything."

"But you are going to take us along, aren't you?" asked Bob Estabrook.

The others looked at Dick, eagerly, and awaited his reply anxiously. They were young fellows, and were never contented to be cooped up in camp. They wished to be out and moving; they were never so happy as when doing something.

"I'll tell you what I have decided to do, boys," said Dick.

"What?" from Bob.

"I am going to take you boys with me as far as——"

"Well?" in an eager chorus.

"St. Mary's River."

"That's the boundary line between Georgia and Florida, isn't it?" asked Mark Morrison.

"Yes."

"How far is it from here?"

"About sixty miles."

"And how far from St. Augustine?" asked Sam Sanderson.

"About forty miles."

"Then you are going to take us more than half way—hurrah!" cried Bob.

"Yes, I am going to take you more than half way."

"And there will be some chance for lively work down there, won't there?" asked Frank Ferris.

"I should think so," was the smiling reply; "there are Tories and redcoats and Indians there in profusion, so it ought not to be a difficult matter to have a lively time."

"Well, we'll have it or know the reason why!" grinned Bob.

"We'll make the Tories, redcoats and Indians think they have been struck by a tropical hurricane!" said Sam Sanderson.

"I don't want you boys to be too venturesome while I am gone on down to St. Augustine," said Dick; "if you are counting on being reckless I shall leave you here."

"Oh, we'll be as quiet and peaceable as little lambs!" said Bob, with mock solemnity.

"Oh, yes, we won't do anything reckless, Dick," said Mark Morrison.

"Of course not!" from Frank Ferris, with a sober face. As this youth was noted for recklessness and utter disregard for danger, and was one who would charge a regiment of redcoats single-handed and alone, this statement was received with smiles.

"I know you wouldn't think of being reckless, Frank," said Dick, with a smile, "but some of the others might." And then there was a chorus of laughter at Frank's expense. He looked around in mock surprise and asked, innocently:

"Now, whatever is there to laugh about, anyway, fellows?"

And then they laughed again.

"Nothing at all, Frank; nothing at all," said Bob. "We are simply laughing because we think it a healthful exercise."

"Oh, that's it?"

"Yes."

"When will we start, Dick?" asked Mark Morrison.

"Right away after dinner, Mark."

"Good!"

"That's the way to talk!"

"The quicker we get started the better I shall like it."

"And the better I shall like it, too."

"We had better begin getting ready for the trip, hadn't we, Dick?"

"Yes," the youth replied; "look to your weapons and see that they are in perfect order, for you will likely have to use them before you get back."

"I hope so!" from Frank Ferris.

"And see to it that you have plenty of ammunition, boys."

"We will."

"And give your horses a good feed and rubbing down."

"Yes, we'll attend to all that."

The youths did as ordered. They got their muskets and pistols out and cleaned them and loaded them carefully. Then they replenished their stock of powder and bullets from the stores, after which they gave their horses a good rubbing down and a good feed. It was then time to eat their own dinner, and they proceeded to do so.

The youths were a jolly lot, and they talked and laughed as they ate, and had as much fun as any boys of their age could be expected to have.

The thought that they were on the point of going on a dangerous journey down into the enemy's country, did not worry them a bit; indeed, it was this very thing that made them feel so lively and jolly. They thrived on danger, and grew fat on fighting.

When the meal was ended the youths bridled and saddled their horses and waited for the return of Dick, who had gone to headquarters for final instructions.

It had become known in the camp that the youths were going on some kind of an expedition, and as the "Liberty Boys" were general favorites on account of their unfailing good humor and lively spirits, a number of the patriot soldiers were present to see them off.

When Dick came back he gave the order to mount.

"Everything is all right, boys," he said; "now we will be off!"

The youths leaped into their saddles and a few minutes later were riding away, toward the south, followed by the cheers of the soldiers who had been left behind.

CHAPTER II.

TRICKING THE INDIANS.

"Crack!"

A wild, blood-curdling yell broke upon the night air.

Crack!

Another wild yell, seemingly of pain and rage commingled.

Then a voice called out:

"Indians! Up and to arms, 'Liberty Boys'! The Indians are upon us!"

The "Liberty Boys" had made very good progress and were within a mile or so of the St. Mary's River, the boundary between Georgia and Florida, when the second evening after leaving Savannah came. They had eaten

their frugal supper and then, placing sentinels, had rolled themselves up in their blankets and gone to sleep. And now, about midnight, they were aroused by the pistol shots and yells, and by the warning cry from the sentinel, to the effect that the Indians were upon them.

As may be supposed, it did not take the youths long to leap up, seize their weapons and take refuge behind trees. Here they awaited the attack from their red foes.

It was not the first time they had been called upon to face redskin enemies. They had fought the red demons in the State of New York, and were well acquainted with their way of fighting.

"How many of them do you think there are, Sam?" asked Dick of the sentinel who had fired the pistol shots and given the alarm, and who had succeeded in getting back into the camp in safety, although fired at by his red foes a number of times.

"I don't think there is a very large force, Dick; not more than a score, I should say."

"Then we have nothing to fear from them."

"No, not from them."

"You think there is danger to be apprehended later on, eh?"

"Yes; you know how the redskins do, Dick?"

"Yes; they send out runners to inform their tribe that an enemy has been found, and then they keep worrying the enemy until they can get an overwhelming force together."

"That is just how they work it."

"Well, we will have to make the best of it."

"Yes."

Knowing that the first thing the Indians would do would be to steal the horses if they could do so, Dick had caused his force to surround the animals, and the horses were within the circle made by the youths.

"They can't get our horses, at any rate," said Dick, with an air of satisfaction.

"No, they can't do that; if they were to succeed in doing so they would have us at their mercy, for we could never get back out of this country afoot."

"No, indeed."

The Indians, who seemed to have the cat-like faculty of seeing in the dark, located the whites and their horses, and fired a flight of arrows in that direction. None of the youths were injured, as they were lying low and taking advantage of the trunks of trees and stones and other obstructions, but one or two of the horses were hit by arrows, and they plunged and snorted at a great rate.

"That will never do," whispered Dick to Bob; "we must not let them kill our horses."

"You are right; we mustn't allow that."

"I am going to fire a volley in that direction, in the hope that we may kill or wound a few of the red fiends. Pass the word around."

"All right."

The word soon went around, and then at a signal from Dick, the signal being a shrill whistle, the youths fired a volley.

The Indians were cunning, however, and, like the "Liberty Boys," they were ensconced behind trees and stones, and it is doubtful if a single bullet inflicted damage on any of the red rascals.

A wild, derisive yell went up from them and this was sufficient to prove that no damage had been done.

The youths were philosophical, however, even though young and full of life and animation. They had not expected to do much, and so were not disturbed by the yell from their dusky enemies.

Dick had noticed a hill which loomed up seemingly half a mile away, that evening as they were going into camp, and now he wished they had gone on to the hill and made their encampment there, as it would be the best possible place for a stand against the redskins. As it was, he made up his mind that it would be necessary to reach the hill before morning, for he believed that the probabilities were that they would be surrounded by an overwhelming force of Indians if they remained where they were.

"If we can reach the top of that hill I think we will be able to hold our own against all the redskins that can come against us," he told Bob Estabrook, and that young man said he thought the same.

So the word was sent around that an attempt was to be made to reach the hill. The majority of the youths were made to reach the hill. The majority of the youths were to take the horses and sneak away and go by a roundabout course, while a dozen or so remained and kept up a desultory firing on the Indians, just sufficient to keep them from suspecting what was going on.

This plan was carried out, and it succeeded perfectly. It is likely that the Indians, seeing that their intended prey were young fellows, did not give them credit for knowing anything about woodcraft, and so did not think of such a thing as that they would attempt to play any shrewd trick on them; this made it easier for the "Liberty Boys" than it would otherwise have been, and so long as the dozen who remained behind kept up a firing, the Indians thought the entire force was still there.

The youths remained there and kept firing at intervals.

for more than an hour after their comrades had stolen away with the horses, and then they ceased firing and stole away in their turn. As they did not have any horses to bother with, they were enabled to make their way through the timber at a lively rate of speed, and yet without making any noise, for all were skilled in woodcraft.

They reached the top of the hill and found their comrades busily engaged in making barricades of stones, sticks and dirt, and were there nearly half an hour before a sound was heard from the direction of the point where they had had their camp. Then of a sudden a wild chorus of yells went up on the night air.

"They've just found out that we have given them the slip!" said Bob Estabrook, with a laugh.

"You are right," agreed Dick.

"I'll wager they are angry!" said Mark Morrison.

"You can tell that by the sound of their voices," said Frank Ferris.

"I guess they thought we were a gang of greenies," said Bob, "and now that they have discovered their mistake they are undoubtedly mad and disgusted."

"But they will be all the more eager to get at us and pay us off for fooling them," said Dick.

"So they will; but they will have a hard time getting the better of us, now that we are up here on top of the hill," said Sam Sanderson.

"Yes, that's true; but I am afraid that we are in for a lot of trouble, now that the Indians have discovered our presence here."

"They'll have some trouble, too!" said Bob Estabrook, grimly.

"You are right, Bob; we will see to it that they have a great deal of trouble, for they are the allies of the British and Tories."

The youths worked steadily and as rapidly as possible, and soon had a good, solid barricade entirely around the rim of the hill, thus converting the top into a veritable fort.

After the first wild chorus of yells which announced that the Indians had discovered the disappearance of their intended victims, nothing more was heard from them for at least half an hour, and then Dick heard the peculiar call of two night-birds, exchanged back and forth, and he understood it at once. The calls were made by Indians, and the whereabouts of the "Liberty Boys" had been discovered.

The Indians, of whom there were about twenty, crept up as close to the top of the hill as they thought they dared, and fired several flights of arrows, but thanks to the warning which Dick had received of their presence, they in-

flicted no damage, the youths having taken refuge behind the barricade.

They returned the Indians' fire, occasionally, just enough to show the enemy that they were not asleep or off their guard, and thus the night passed away and morning dawned.

The youths were glad to see daylight, for then they would be able to see what was going on around them. They would make the Indians take refuge in flight, too, if they got a chance at them, and they felt that they would succeed in getting the opportunity.

They ate breakfast and then began making preparations to begin the campaign against their red foes. Fifty of the youths, the ones most skilled in woodcraft, left the fort and began making their way, slowly and stealthily, in the direction of the point where the Indians were concealed.

The redskins knew the enemy was approaching, and tried to put a stop to the advance by firing flight after flight of arrows, but this had no effect; the youths kept their bodies protected, and were not injured. On the other hand, they began firing occasional shots, and nearly every time a "Liberty Boy" fired he succeeded in wounding one of the Indians. Dick, who was one of the party, succeeded in putting a bullet through the head of a venturesome warrior, and this caused consternation among his brother braves.

They decided that it would not be safe to remain where they were, and, taking the dead warrior with them, they hastened to get away from that dangerous locality, the youths giving them a number of shots and wounding some more of the redskins before they got to a safe distance.

Bob wanted to charge the redskins, but Dick was not willing. "They would fire a volley or two of arrows," he said, "and would be almost certain to kill some of our boys, and we don't want to lose any lives fighting the brutes, if we can help it. What we want is to discourage and drive them away."

"That's right," agreed Bob; "I would hate to be killed by one of those red fiends, after going safely through as many battles as we already have."

The Indians having retreated, the youths returned to the fort on top of the hill.

"What shall we do, Dick?" asked Mark Morrison. "Are we going onward on our way, now?"

"I think we had better stay here a few hours and see what happens," was the reply; "we have a strong situation here, and if the Indians should appear in force we would be able to beat them off, I am sure; while if we were to leave this place and get caught in the lowlands we would all be killed."

"That's so; and do you think the Indians will appear in force?"

"I am inclined to think they will."

"You think this little party sent messengers to the Indian village, do you?"

"I would not be surprised if such were the case."

"Well, we will know before very long, I suppose."

"Yes, within an hour or two, I should say."

The youths, now that they had daylight to aid them, saw where their barricade could be made stronger in many places, and as soon as they had eaten breakfast they went to work and did the necessary work.

They had just finished when one of the youths, who had been sent up into the top of a large tree growing on the hill, called down:

"The Indians are coming!"

"From which direction?" asked Dick.

"The west."

"How large a force does there seem to be?"

"Looks like there might be five hundred of the red fiends!"

"So many as that?"

"Yes."

The youth had expected that quite a large force would come, but he had not anticipated such a large number as that given by the lookout, and he climbed up into the tree-top and took a look himself.

"What do you think about it, now?" asked Sam Sanderson, who was the lookout in question.

"I guess you haven't missed it far, Sam," was the sober reply.

"There are five hundred, you think?"

"At least that many; there are more, rather than less."

"That's what I think."

"You are right; well, it means serious work for us."

"So it does; five hundred Indians is no joke!"

"Far from it, old man!"

"Still, with our strong position, and the barricade, I think we will be able to hold them off, don't you, Dick?"

"During the daytime, yes; but when night comes I am afraid that we will be overpowered."

"Maybe something will turn up to favor us before night."

"Perhaps so; well, keep your eyes on them, Sam, and report progress, and I will go down and tell the boys and begin making preparations for a fight with the red demons."

The youth climbed down and told the "Liberty Boys" that they were in for it. "There are more than five hun-

dred redskins coming, and they will make a furious attack, without doubt. We must get ready to receive them."

"All right; we'll try and make it warm for them!" said Bob, grimly.

The other youths said the same, and they went to work, grimly and determinedly, and soon had all their arrangements completed. Fifty of the youths were to fire three volleys—one from their muskets and two from pistols, and then they were to lie back and reload their weapons while the other fifty were firing three volleys; they would thus never be caught with empty weapons.

The large force had evidently been met by the small party, for the Indians advanced unhesitatingly and completely surrounded the hill. Then they began advancing.

They did not come with a rush and a hurrah, but they came slowly and cautiously, shielding themselves behind rocks, boulders and trees.

They were dealing with youths who were expert shots, however, and as soon as the enemy was within musket-shot distance, the boys began firing occasional shots whenever they got sight of a redskin and felt confident of hitting him.

In this way they killed several of the Indians and wounded a number, and as the death-yells of their brother braves sounded, the anger of the warriors rose higher and higher, and suddenly with wild yells they bounded forward, yelling like demons. They were not yet within arrow-shot distance, so did not fire a flight of arrows, but they were within musket and pistol-shot distance, and the youths opened fire, firing in volleys of fifty, as had been decided upon.

First the muskets were fired and then two pistol volleys, and then the fifty lay back and began reloading, while the other half of the force took up the fight and fired three volleys in its turn.

And now was shown the value of experience in fighting battles. Novices would have been so nervous and frightened that not one shot in a dozen would have inflicted damage on the enemy, but with the "Liberty Boys" it was different. They were veterans, and were cool and calm, and not a bit nervous or excited. They had long ago learned that to do good work it was necessary to keep perfectly cool, and take aim as calmly as if the target were an inanimate one, and there was no danger threatening. They had learned also by experience that when this was done the majority of the shots told; nearly every bullet killed or wounded an enemy, and the result was that said enemy was discouraged.

It was so in this case. Indians are noted for fond-

ness for open fighting, and when they saw their brother braves falling on all sides of them like the leaves from the trees on a fall morning, they became possessed of a feeling of demoralization, of fear. They had never encountered an enemy that could inflict so much damage as this one was doing, and so when they got within range, they fired a shower of arrows, and turned and fled at the top of their speed.

As the "Liberty Boys" witnessed this action on the part of the Indians, a wild yell of delight went up from them. They gave utterance to cheer after cheer, but even while doing so they were busily engaged in reloading their weapons. They were old hands and never failed to make the most of any opportunity that came to them.

"I guess the red scoundrels have found out that they are not going to have such an easy time of it, after all!" said Bob Estabrook, with a grin.

"You are right," agreed Mark Morrison, plucking an arrow out of his coat-sleeve.

"But they outnumber us so greatly that we will be fortunate if we get out of this without the majority of our number losing their lives, I'm thinking," said Dick, soberly.

"We beat them off once and we can do it again and again!" said Frank Ferris, who had been wounded slightly by one of the arrows, but who thought nothing of the matter.

"We will be able to hold them at bay during the day," said Dick; "but when nightfall comes then they will be enabled to crawl right up close without our seeing them, and a quick rush will end all, as they will be too much for us once they get within the fort and it becomes a hand-to-hand affair."

"Oh, we'll wait till night comes before getting anxious," laughed Frank Ferris.

The Indians made another assault before noon, but were again repulsed, with considerable slaughter. Two of the "Liberty Boys" were killed and five were wounded, but their spirits were not cast down. They had killed one hundred and fifty of the Indians, they were sure.

About the middle of the afternoon the redskins made another attack, and the most desperate one yet. They seemed determined to force their way into the fort, but were finally beaten back and retreated to a safe distance, and the chiefs got together and began holding a council.

The youths could see them from the hilltop, and Dick shook his head.

"They are plotting mischief now," he said, "and I think that we are in for it. I wish that we were out of this scrape!"

"Never say die!" said Bob Estabrook.

"Oh, we'll keep our courage up and will fight to the death," said Dick; "but I fear that not many of us will live to get out of this scrape."

"Well, I'll wager that if that is the case there won't be half as many of those red scoundrels alive when it is over as there are alive now!" said Bob, grimly.

And the other "Liberty Boys" nodded their heads, to indicate that they coincided with this statement.

"If help doesn't come to us before evening," said Dick, "I'll tell you what I have made up my mind that we must do."

"What?" in chorus.

"We must mount our horses and make a dash for our lives!"

This seemed to meet with the approval of all, and they said so.

"It seems to be our only chance," said Sam Sanderson.

"And it is a slim one," said Dick; "but it is better than to remain here and be slaughtered by the red fiends."

"Yes, indeed!"

"Of course, you do not really have any expectation that help may come to us, Dick?" said Mark Morrison.

The youth shook his head.

"No," he said; "we are in the enemy's country and if either force received aid I should judge that it would be the Indians."

"That seems to be a reasonable supposition," said Bob Estabrook.

"I guess we'll have to mount our horses and charge the demons," said Frank Ferris, and his eyes fairly shone as he said this. It was evident that, if he did not really hope that they would be forced to this last resort, Frank was at least anticipating that he would get some pleasure and excitement out of the affair if forced to do it.

"Yes, I have no doubt that we will have to do that very thing," said Dick.

"Well, one thing is certain," said Mark Morrison, "and that is, that some of us will escape and they will be able to get back to Savannah and carry the news of our fate to our comrades, there."

"Yes, that is some consolation."

The youths kept up the conversation and kept watch of the redskins at the same time. They felt that it might be the last time that many of them would ever hear one another's voices in this world, and they made the most of the opportunity.

Perhaps two hours had passed since the last attack,

and then suddenly there came the sound of wild yells from the Indians, followed by the report of firearms.

"What can that mean?" exclaimed Dick, looking eagerly in the direction from which the yelling and firing came.

CHAPTER III.

BLACKS VS. REDS.

"Father, I hear the sound of firing!"

"You must be mistaken, Fannie."

"I'm sure I am not."

"Which way from here does it seem to be?"

"North, father."

"North?"

"Yes, and a little west."

"Probably some hunters."

"Oh, no; there is too much of it for that."

"What do you think it is, then?"

"I don't know; but it sounds more like a battle than anything else."

"Oh, it couldn't be a battle, for there are no patriot soldiers down in this part of the country."

"Not that we know of."

"No; there are only the home Tories, the refugee Tories, the redcoats and the Indians, and they are all on the same side, and are alike in preying upon the few patriots who are in this part of the country."

A mile south of St. Mary's River, in Florida, a man and a girl of eighteen years were riding along a road leading eastward. The man was a handsome, gray-bearded, fine-looking gentleman, and the girl was blue-eyed, fair-haired and beautiful. The two were Colonel Hanshaw and his daughter Fannie, and they had been on a visit to an outlying farm, or plantation, more properly speaking.

The colonel was very rich, owning several thousand acres of land, and on the main plantation he had a large mansion, standing in the centre of a field of perhaps twenty acres. Around this field was a heavy stockade fence twenty feet high and four feet thick, and inside the enclosure were two hundred negro cabins, which were arranged along the four walls of the stockade fence, the rear of the cabins being the fence itself, this making but three sides necessary in building the cabins.

In these cabins lived the slaves of Colonel Hanshaw, and, counting women and children, he owned at least fifteen hundred. He had on this main plantation four

hundred able-bodied, full-grown male slaves, and the colonel had drilled the black fellows till they were as well up in military tactics and evolutions as the members of any regiment in the patriot army.

The truth of the matter was that Colonel Hanshaw, while not making any declarations of his leanings either way, was in reality a patriot, and his idea in teaching his slaves how to fight was so that they might be able to offer battle to the British if it should be found out that he was a patriot. He claimed that he was teaching his slaves to fight in order that they would be able to hold their own against the Indians, and this was accepted for truth by most of the people of the vicinity, though there were some Tories who hinted their suspicions that Colonel Hanshaw was a "rebel."

It would have been dangerous for almost any other man in the South to have placed arms in the hands of four hundred stalwart, male slaves, but it was not dangerous for Colonel Hanshaw. He had always treated his slaves well, and they loved him and would have cheerfully died for him at any time. Many a night the colonel—and his sweet, pretty daughter as well—had sat up at the bedside of a sick slave and comforted the weeping and frightened relatives with their presence. To the last one, man, woman or child, "Massa Cunnel" stood for all that was good and wise in this world, and they would have walked straight into the fire for him at any time.

Now to return to the colonel and his daughter. They were still a mile from the home plantation and were riding slowly, the girl with her head inclined in a listening attitude.

"There, father!" she suddenly exclaimed. "Don't you hear it now?"

The colonel shook his head.

"No, Fannie; you know my hearing is not good."

"True, I forgot; but I can hear it plainly! I hear firing, and it isn't the occasional desultory firing of hunters, but the combined roar of many weapons. What can it mean?"

"I'm sure I do not know, Fannie."

"Let us hasten home, father, and I will go up on the roof of the house and see if I can see anything with the glass."

"Very well, Fannie."

They urged their horses into a gallop and were soon at the great gate leading into the enclosure. A blast from a little trumpet the colonel carried, blown while yet they were fifty yards from the gate, caused the gate to swing open and they rode right on through at a gallop, nodding

and smiling at the grinning, ten-year-old black boy who had opened the gate for them.

The black boy closed the gate, emitted a whoop and went spinning, pinwheel-fashion, across the open space and along in front of the negro cabins, until knocked over by a slap from the hand of a vigorous black woman.

"Wha's de matter wid yo', Sambo?" the woman asked. "Hush yo' noise an' go bring sum wattah."

"Missy Fannie done smile at me!" the boy cried, as he seized a pail and ran away to bring the water.

"Missy Fannie done smile at 'im!" the woman repeated, with a grin. "I s'pose uf she wuz ter laff at 'im de little fool'd try ter turn some new-fangled kin' uv er han'spring an' break his fool neck!"

The colonel and his daughter were soon at the house, and leaping down, while her father alighted more sedately, the girl ran up onto the piazza and on into the house. She hastened along the hall, and without stopping to take off her hat made her way up the three flights of stairs and emerged finally onto a large observation platform on the top of the mansion. In her hand she held a fieldglass, and she placed it to her eyes and looked in the direction in which she had heard the firing.

She moved the glass hither and thither, sweeping the country all around the vicinity of the place where she thought the sound had come from, and presently a little cry of satisfaction escaped the girl's lips.

"I knew it!" she exclaimed. "I knew I heard firing, and—yes, there it goes again! I hear it plainly, and I can see men who are firing! They are on the top of that hill, half a mile beyond the St. Mary's, and they are not redcoats, either, for they have not the scarlet uniform. Ah! and I see who the attacking party is, too—it is made up of Indians! Yes, and what a lot of them there are! There must be three or four hundred!"

Then the girl turned and called down the stairway:

"Father! Father! Are you coming?"

"Yes, Fannie," was the reply.

"Well, hurry!"

"Hurry?"

"Yes."

"What is it all about? Have you discovered anything?"

"Yes, yes!"

Mr. Hanshaw stepped up onto the observation platform at this moment, and the girl handed him the glass.

"Look!" she exclaimed. "Look at the top of the Magnolia Hill, over beyond the St. Mary's."

The colonel did so, watched eagerly by his daughter, who seemed unable to stand still, so excited was she.

"Do you see them, father?" she asked.

"Yes, Fannie."

"The white men on the top of the hill?"

"Yes, and the Indians down its side."

"Yes, yes! There are a lot of them, father!"

"Yes, there must be three or four hundred."

"And they are attacking the white men on the hill!"

"So they are, Fannie."

"And, father—the white men are not redcoats!"

"No, that is a self-evident fact, for the redcoats always wear uniforms. They could not fight if they didn't have their red coats on, I think."

"And, father, you said a while ago that the Tories, redcoats and Indians were all on the same side in this war, so who, then, can the men be who are being attacked?"

The colonel shook his head.

"That is too much of a riddle for me to answer, Fannie," he replied.

"Well, father, if they are not Tories or redcoats, they must be patriots!"

The colonel was silent a few moments, thinking, and then he nodded his head.

"That would be the inference," he agreed.

"And, father, if they are patriots, we must not let them be killed and scalped by those terrible Indians!"

Colonel Hanshaw looked sober.

"No, it don't seem right to leave them to their fate," he said, slowly.

"We must not do it, father!"

"What do you want me to do, Fannie?"

"Take our army of blacks and go and drive the Indians away!"

The colonel smiled.

"Put the blacks against the reds, eh?" he remarked.

"Yes."

A sober look came over the colonel's face.

"I was in hopes," he said, slowly, "that we would be able to get through this war without being forced to show our hand; that we would be able to get through without getting embroiled in trouble, and I am afraid that if we go out and attack the redskins it will be construed by General Prevost as a declaration against the king, and identify us with the cause of Liberty, and the result will be that we will have a hard time of it from this time forth."

"It can't be helped, father; we cannot stand here and witness the slaughter of white men by a horde of painted red demons, and not turn our hands over to render them assistance!"

"True, Fannie; it would not be right."

"No, it would be inhuman—and you are one of the most humane and tender-hearted of men, my father!"

The girl threw her arms around her father's neck and gave him a kiss, and this finished the work.

"I'll take my little army of blacks and go to the relief of the white men!" the colonel declared.

"Oh, father, I am so glad you are going to do so!" the girl exclaimed. "And no matter what may be the results to us, I will endure them without murmuring."

"I know you will do that, Fannie," with pride; "you are just like your dear, dead mother was—brave and uncomplaining."

"You must be careful, though, father, and not take too many risks yourself," the girl said; "those Indians are cruel, and I don't want you to lose your life at their hands."

"I will be careful, Fannie. I don't think they will stand their ground, however, when they see themselves being attacked by such a strong force."

"You think they will flee?"

"Yes; redskins are brave only when they outnumber their enemy four or five to one, or have some other great advantage. They do not want to fight on equal terms, ever."

"I guess you are right; but be careful, father."

"I will be as cautious as circumstances will permit, Fannie."

Then the colonel kissed his daughter and started to go down.

"Aren't you coming down, Fannie?" he asked.

"No, father; I will stay up here and watch you go and make the attack."

"Very well; I will hasten, as the red demons might overcome those white men at any moment."

He hastened down to the ground and emerged upon the piazza, with a bugle in his hand. He placed this to his lips and blew a peculiar call. It was the signal for the little army to assemble, and in an incredibly short time after the signal had been given four hundred stalwart black men stood, weapons in hand, in front of the house, their eyes fixed on their leader, the white-haired colonel.

"Men," said the colonel, his voice ringing out loud and clear, "a small party of white men are on the top of Magnolia Hill and are being attacked by a large party of Indians, and I have decided to go to the relief of the white men. I am going to take you and hasten there and attack the redskins. Are you ready for the start?"

The colored soldiers nodded their heads and then the colonel mounted his horse and set out, the little army following, and as it filed out through the gateway it was

followed by loud cries and cheers from the wives and children of the men.

The colonel rode at a pace that kept his men walking rapidly, and even then it took nearly an hour for them to reach the vicinity of the Indians, as they were forced to go a roundabout way in order to get across the river on a bridge.

They finally arrived at the foot of the hill, halfway up the side of which were the Indians, and they succeeded in getting within musket-shot distance of the redskins before they were discovered.

Then the colonel, who was a believer in the efficacy of the first blow, gave the order to fire.

Crash—roar! the volley rang out, and although the negroes were somewhat excited, this being their first real attempt at fighting, they managed to do considerable execution among the Indians, at least fifty falling, dead and wounded.

Then the colonel gave the order to charge, and rode forward at a gallop, waving his sword, while behind him, yelling as only four hundred excited colored men could yell, came the army of blacks.

The Indians were taken by surprise, and the sight of such a large force of black demons—as the negroes looked to them—charging upon them with fixed bayonets, was too much for them. With wild yells they turned and fled through the timber at their best speed, and half a minute later not a redskin could be seen anywhere—with the exception of the dead and wounded lying where they had fallen on the hillside.

It was the firing of the weapons in the hands of the negroes, and their yelling, and that of the Indians, that Dick and the "Liberty Boys" had heard, and the instant Dick saw the little army of black men and realized that it was its appearance that had put the redskins to flight, he exclaimed:

"We are saved! Those black fellows are our friends!"

"Their leader is a white man, Dick," said Bob.

"Yes, and an old and fine-looking man, too."

"Yes, and I'll warrant you he has seen service in the army."

"I don't doubt it. But where in the name of all that is wonderful did he find so many black men?"

"Oh, there are plenty of them down in this part of the country."

"You are right; well, I will go down and greet the man and thank him for what he has done for us."

"Go ahead, and you can't thank him too much, for he has undoubtedly saved the lives of the majority of us."

"There is no doubt regarding that, and he has my gratitude for what he has done."

"And mine!"

"And mine!"

"The same here!"

Expressions similar to these were given utterance to by all the "Liberty Boys." They realized that their lives had been saved by the white man and his black army, and they were indeed grateful.

Dick made his way down the hillside and met the white leader of the black army. The colonel dismounted as Dick reached him, and, holding out his hand, said, with a smile:

"Well, you had rather a close call of it, did you not, my young friend?"

"We did, for a fact," was the reply; "and but for your coming I have no doubt that the majority of my men would have lost their lives. We are very grateful to you, sir, for what you have done."

"Don't mention it," the colonel said, deprecatingly.

"Oh, but I must mention it," with a smile; "and now, sir, if you will be so kind, I would like to know to whom we are indebted?"

"My name is Hanshaw, sir—Robert Hanshaw; but most everybody in these parts call me 'Colonel Hanshaw.' I was a colonel in the army during the French and Indian War."

"Ah, I see; well, Colonel Hanshaw, I am pleased to make your acquaintance, and again I say that we are deeply grateful to you for what you have done."

"Pshaw! say no more about it; I am not the one who deserves the credit, anyway, but my daughter is the one that should be given the credit for the whole thing."

"Your daughter?"

"Yes, my daughter Fannie. She heard the firing, and went up on the roof of the house with my old fieldglass and she peeked around till she saw your force on the hill and the Indians down the hillside, and she hustled me off with my army, to render you assistance."

"Then God bless your daughter Fanny, colonel!"

"She's a great girl, sir; a splendid girl—but here, you know who I am, but I don't know who you are?" and the colonel looked at Dick inquiringly.

The youth hesitated and the colonel noticed it.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "Why do you hesitate?"

The youth laughed. "I was thinking that it might be possible that if I was to tell you who I and my men are, you might turn your black men loose on us, sir," was the reply.

The colonel looked at the youth keenly, then smiled and said:

"You need not hesitate to tell me. I give you my word of honor that you will not be molested. I am not a partisan, but am simply a large land and slave holder, and own two big plantations across the river."

"And these men are the slaves who work on the plantations?"

"Yes."

"But they seem to understand military tactics."

"I have taught them."

"Ah!"

"I have done so in order that we might be able to hold our own if attacked by the Indians or by any other outside force."

"I see; well, I will tell you who I am, and who my men are. We owe you that much, I am sure, and a good deal more; for you have undoubtedly saved the lives of the majority of us."

"I shall be glad to know who you are."

"Very well; my name is Slater—Dick Slater."

The colonel started, and an exclamation escaped his lips.

"Are you really Dick Slater—the great Dick Slater, who has made himself so famous by his good work as a scout, spy and fighter?"

"I am Dick Slater," said Dick, quietly; "the only one I have ever heard of, and I have done what I could for the great cause."

"And your men, up there—are they the famous 'Liberty Boys' we have heard so much about?"

"They are the 'Liberty Boys,' that is certain," was the reply.

"Well, well! I must shake hands again!" the colonel exclaimed, suiting the action to the word. "Dick Slater, I am proud to make your acquaintance, and am more glad than you can know that I have been able to render you and your men assistance in your time of need."

"And I am glad to make your acquaintance, Colonel Hanshaw," was the reply. "And I am very, very glad to think, judging by your utterances, that you are friendly to the great cause of Liberty."

"I am a patriot, Mr. Slater, but so far I have avoided saying or doing anything to let the British or their allies know that such is the case."

"Then the chances are that you are getting yourself into trouble by coming to our assistance in this manner, Colonel Hanshaw."

"It is possible, of course, but it can't be helped if such is the case. I could hardly have gotten clear through the

war without having committed myself, and it is perhaps as well to have it done and over with."

"It may be possible, colonel, that as you have taken part against the redskins, that it will not prejudice the British against you."

The colonel shook his head.

"The Indians are looked upon as allies of the British," he said, "and they know that I am aware of the fact, and I think that they will interpret my attack on the Indians as a declaration in favor of the cause of Liberty, and against the king. However, it is all right; I am not sorry I came to your relief, but, on the contrary, am very, very glad that I did so, and so will my daughter be when she learns who it is that we have rendered assistance to."

"I hope you will have no trouble as a result of this affair, Colonel Hanshaw."

"Well, we are pretty well able to take care of ourselves if trouble comes, Mr. Slater. I am not worrying, and if General Prevost wants to look upon me as an enemy, and make an attack upon me, he may do so. We will make it extremely warm for him, even if he brings his entire force against us."

"Is that indeed the case—that you are in a position to offer the British battle?" asked Dick, in surprise.

"It is. My mansion is inside an enclosure, twenty acres in extent, and around this field is a stockade wall four feet thick and twenty feet high. I can muster five hundred men who would make a great fight even against heavy odds."

"True; well, I hope it will not come to that."

"So do I; but bring your men and come along. We will go to the plantation at once, as I know my daughter Fannie is eagerly and anxiously awaiting our coming."

"Oh, but we cannot add to the dangers of your position by visiting your plantation, colonel," protested Dick; "you have done enough for us already and have taken quite enough risk."

"Bosh!" said the colonel. "You must come; I will not listen to anything else. Let the British come and attack me if they like; I will make it warm for them. And if your men are there to help my brave colored fellows I don't believe there are enough British and Tories in all this southern region to get the better of us."

"Well, if you insist we will accompany you; but I would rather not cause you any more trouble."

"That's all right; Fannie would never forgive me if I were to let you go your way now. She is waiting, eager to see you, and I know that you are too much of a true gentleman to disappoint a lady."

"Yes, indeed; and especially a lady to whom we owe our lives, colonel."

The planter smiled and looked pleased.

"If you owe your lives to any one it is to her," he said; "I would not have known anything about you or that you were in trouble if it hadn't been for her. She heard the firing and then went up on the top of the house and located you and sized up the situation. She figured it that you were patriots, as the Indians would not be fighting Tories, and she knew you were not British, as you did not have on the scarlet uniforms."

"She is as bright as she is noble-hearted, colonel."

"And she is the best and sweetest little girl in the world, Captain Slater. She ordered me to take the black men and go to your assistance, and I obeyed; and while she did not order me to bring you back with me, I know that is her wish, and so you and your men must come. Give the order at once, please."

"Very well, sir," and Dick did give the order.

Ten minutes later the "Liberty Boys" came riding down to where the colonel, Dick and the black army were awaiting their coming, and Dick introduced the colonel to the youths, who gave him a pleasant greeting and uttered three cheers for his daughter Fannie.

Then Dick mounted one of the horses and the entire force of "Liberty Boys" and black men moved slowly away. The youths cast sorrowful glances back over their shoulders as long as the top of the hill was in sight, and the colonel, who noticed it, asked Dick the reason for the youths' actions.

"We are leaving three of our comrades on top of that hill, colonel," was the sober reply; "three as brave and noble-hearted fellows as ever lived! But they were ready to die; not a man in my company but is ready to yield up his life for the great cause at any moment. We are a company of philosophers as well as patriots, Colonel Hanshaw."

CHAPTER IV.

A CLEVER SCHEME.

A sharp lookout was kept for the Indians, as the party made its way along. It was deemed possible that the redskins might try to get revenge by attacking the combined forces of the blacks and "Liberty Boys," but nothing was seen of the redmen. Doubtless they had had enough for that time.

Three-quarters of an hour later they reached the plantation owned by Colonel Hanshaw, and when the youths saw the immense stockade wall, they opened their eyes in amazement.

"Jove! that is all right, eh, Dick?" exclaimed Bob Estabrook.

"Yes, Bob."

"Five hundred determined men ought to be able to hold that against an army."

"I should think so."

"Yes, we have plenty of water and provisions within the enclosure," the colonel said; "they could not starve us out, and they would have hard work whipping us."

"They would, indeed!" agreed Dick.

"See, there is my daughter up on top of the house," said the colonel, pointing.

"I see her," said Dick; "you must have a splendid view of the surrounding country from up there."

"Yes, indeed; we can see in every direction, for many miles."

"Say, why not let us stay here while you go down to St. Augustine, Dick?" remarked Bob, in a low voice; but Colonel Hanshaw heard what was said, and turned an inquiring look on Dick.

"Are you thinking of going down to St. Augustine?" he asked.

"Yes, colonel," was the reply.

"For what purpose, if I may ask?"

"I am going down there to spy on the British, colonel."

"Ah, to spy on them!"

"Yes. I wish to learn how many men General Prevost has, and how strong the fortifications are, and as many things like that as it is possible for me to learn."

"Oh, yes, I understand. There is a plan on foot to make an attack on St. Augustine?"

"Yes; if what I learn is considered as making such an attempt favorable."

"I suppose General Howe, of Savannah, is the one who is figuring on doing this?"

"Yes; we have just come from him."

"I see; well, I hope you will be successful, and I am going to insist that your men remain here while you are away on your spying expedition, Mr. Slater."

"So far as we are concerned we will be only too glad to avail ourselves of your kind invitation," said Dick; "but as I told you, back yonder at the mountain, I am afraid that it may result in getting you into trouble, and for that reason I would really prefer that my men should go out

into the wilderness and go into camp and take their chances there."

The colonel shook his head.

"I could not hear to such a thing," he said, decidedly; "and I know that Fannie would not listen to it. We would be acting queerly to save your lives and then cause you to in all probability lose them by permitting you to go out into the wilderness where the Indians and Tories would have full sway at you."

"Oh, we will accept your invitation, if you insist upon it, and will be very grateful to you, too," said Dick; "and I hope that we will be able to show our gratitude before we part from you again, for good and all."

"Oh, that is all right," the colonel said; "we know you feel thankful, and we are only too glad that we were enabled to help you when you needed help."

They were now within the enclosure, and the gate had been closed behind them.

"Ride right up to the piazza and dismount," said the colonel; "you see, I have a large house—a veritable mansion; and there is room for all your men in there, Mr. Slater, and there is plenty of food and plenty of servants to serve it. So ride right up to the piazza and dismount and proceed to make yourselves at home."

The youths did as told, and when they had dismounted, at a signal from the colonel, slaves came and took the horses away. Then a beautiful girl of perhaps seventeen years emerged from the house and the colonel led Dick forward.

"Fannie," he said, "this is Captain Dick Slater, of whom we have heard so much; Mr. Slater, my daughter Fannie."

The girl stepped forward and gave Dick her hand, smiling in the sweetest manner imaginable. "I am glad to make the acquaintance of one who has done such good work for the cause of Liberty," she said, her voice soft and musical.

"And I am glad to make the acquaintance of one so good-hearted and humane as you, Miss Hanshaw," said Dick; "and I thank you, in the name of the 'Liberty Boys,' for saving our lives this afternoon."

"Oh, I suppose father gave me all the credit!" the girl exclaimed, blushing. "That is just like him; he does the work and gives me the praise."

"Well, you know you were the one who discovered that there was some one in trouble, Fannie," said her father; "I would never have known it but for you."

"So you are entitled to the credit, and our thanks, Miss Hanshaw," smiled Dick.

"But I do not want any thanks, Mr. Slater; the knowl-

edge that I have been instrumental in rendering assistance to some partiot soldiers in need is sufficient in itself."

"At least you cannot keep us from thanking you in our hearts," smiled Dick.

"No, I suppose not," with an answering smile.

"And now let me introduce you to the 'Liberty Boys.'" said Colonel Hanshaw.

"Very well, father."

The colonel turned and facing the youths, said:

"'Liberty Boys of '76,' permit me to introduce to you my daughter Fannie; Fannie, these are the famous 'Liberty Boys.'"

As the youths lifted their hats and bowed politely, the girl laughingly shook her head and said:

"I have heard a great deal about the 'Liberty Boys,' and I am going to have more than a bowing acquaintance with you. I am going to shake hands with each and every one."

And she suited the action to the word, for she made the rounds and shook hands with every one of the youths, and won the hearts of the majority of them at the same time.

When she had finished the youths gave three cheers for the beautiful girl, and this made her smile and blush with pleasure.

The colonel now told the youths to make themselves absolutely at home, to go and come as they pleased, and to select any rooms they liked in any portion of the mansion.

"You are the guests of myself and daughter for as long a time as you care to remain," he said, heartily; "and you are to go and come just as you please. There are plenty of slaves; order them to bring you anything you may want and they will obey you the same as if I had given the order."

Then the colonel and Fannie, accompanied by Dick, entered the house and went to the library to hold a council. When they had become seated the colonel turned to Dick and said:

"As we were coming to the plantation you told me, Mr. Slater, that you were down here for the purpose of spying on the British at St. Augustine."

The youth nodded.

"Yes, that is my mission in this part of the country," he replied.

"Oh, you are thinking of going down to St. Augustine on a spying expedition, Mr. Slater?" exclaimed Fannie.

"Yes, Miss Hanshaw."

"Oh, goodness! I don't see how you will dare attempt it!"

"You don't?" with a smile.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because it will be so dangerous."

The youth smiled.

"I am used to danger," he said.

"I know that, but this seems like taking terrible risks."

"Why so, more than on dozens of other occasions when I have penetrated to within the enemy's lines, Miss Fannie?"

"Well, you see, you are wholly within the enemy's country, down here."

"Yes, that is true."

"With the exception of the men on father's plantation I doubt if there are any people within fifty miles of here who would be willing to render you assistance."

"True; but the aid which you and your father can render me is all-sufficient, I think."

"I hope so; we will certainly do all we can, won't we, father?"

"Yes, indeed, Fannie."

"Thank you," said Dick; "you are both very kind."

"Oh, we are only too glad to be enabled to do something to aid the great cause," said the girl.

"When do you think of starting for St. Augustine, Mr. Slater?" asked the colonel.

"At the earliest possible moment, colonel; I had it in mind that I would start immediately after supper."

"This evening?" exclaimed Fannie.

"Yes."

Mr. Hanshaw shook his head.

"I don't think I would be in any hurry," he said; "you had better go slow and be as sure of your ground as possible."

"I would if I thought there was anything to be gained by so doing, colonel."

"I think there will be."

"In what way?" asked Dick, in surprise. "There is just one thing for me to do—ride down as close to St. Augustine as I dare, and then watch my chance and slip in when no one is looking."

"I know; but that will be difficult of accomplishment."

"Yes; but it is the only way of doing."

"Perhaps not."

Colonel Hanshaw spoke meaningly, and Dick looked at him in surprise.

"What do you mean, colonel?" he asked.

"I mean that perhaps we may be able to help you in this matter."

"To help me?"

"Yes."

"In what way?"

"By making it possible for you to enter the enemy's lines at St. Augustine in safety."

"How could you do that?"

"I have thought of a way."

The colonel smiled, and Fannie exclaimed, eagerly:

"Tell us, father!"

"Well," said the colonel, slowly, "I have a sister living in St. Augustine."

"You have?" exclaimed Dick, an eager light appearing in his eyes, while an exclamation escaped the lips of the girl.

"Yes. And Fannie, here, makes two trips down there each year on a visit."

"Ah!" exclaimed Dick.

"Oh, father, I know what you are thinking of!" cried the girl.

"It is almost time for Fannie to make her visit now," the colonel went on, calmly, "and we can push the affair a bit and let her go a little earlier than usual."

"Dear father!" breathed the girl, her eyes shining.

"But what good will that do me?" asked Dick.

"What good will it do you?"

"Yes."

"A lot of good."

"I don't understand, colonel."

"I will explain."

"Please do so, and if your plan is practicable, I shall be very glad to make use of it."

"It is entirely practicable."

"But what is it, father?"

"It is that Mr. Slater accompany you, Fannie."

The youth shook his head slowly. "I think the British will be suspicious of me," he said.

"Not at all," said Colonel Hanshaw.

"You think not?"

"No, for you will go in the guise of a servant—do you understand?"

Dick's face cleared.

"Oh, you mean that I am to black up and go as one of your slaves?" he exclaimed.

"Yes; Fannie always takes a man and a maid servant, and you can go as the man servant."

"I see; and we stay at your sister's home as long as Miss Fannie remains, do we?"

"Yes."

"Good!" said Dick. "That is a splendid scheme. It will give me the very best opportunity in the world to

gain the information I wish, as I will have the run of the place, as the servant of Miss Fannie, and no one will suspect me."

Colonel Hanshaw nodded. "That is it, exactly," he said.

"But won't that be dreadfully unpleasant, Mr. Slater?" asked Fannie.

"Oh, no," was the smiling reply.

"I should think it would be—to have to black yourself up in that fashion."

"It won't be the first time I have done such a thing, Miss Fannie."

"It won't?"

"No; I have frequently disguised myself in that way when playing the spy on the British."

"Well, I suppose it is better than to take big chances of being made a prisoner, if seen in your own proper guise."

"Oh, yes! One can endure little inconveniences like that, if by so doing one can be assured that he is reasonably safe."

"True."

"How do you make the journey to St. Augustine, Miss Fannie?"

"By carriage, Mr. Slater."

"Ah, you don't go on horseback."

"No, it is too far, and would be too fatiguing to go in that manner," said the colonel.

"But it must take quite a while to get there by carriage," said Dick.

"We make the trip in one day without driving so very hard," said the colonel.

"Indeed?"

"Oh, yes; it is not quite forty miles, and we have some good horses."

"Well, that makes it a very simple matter to make the trip, then."

"Oh, yes!"

"And when can we start on this trip?"

"In the morning—that is, if you can get ready so soon, Fannie."

"Oh, I can get ready easily, father," was the prompt reply.

"Very well; then that is settled and you can govern yourself accordingly, Mr. Slater."

"Very well, sir; the arrangement suits me splendidly."

After some further conversation Colonel Hanshaw excused himself to go and see about giving orders for supper, and presently the girl excused herself, saying that if she was to start for St. Augustine early in the morning she must begin making preparations for the trip. This left

Dick free to rejoin the "Liberty Boys," which he did. When he told them the plan that had been arranged for his trip to St. Augustine, the youths were loud in their approval of it.

"That's a good scheme," said Bob Estabrook.

"The best in the world!" declared Mark Morrison.

The others said the same.

"But don't you think it will be dangerous to start out, Dick?" asked Bob, after a while.

"Why, Bob?"

"On account of the Indians."

The youth looked sober.

"I had not thought of that," he said; "do you suppose they followed us yesterday and saw us enter here with the colonel and his little army?"

"You may be sure they did if they are anything like the Northern Indians," said Bob.

"I guess you are right, Bob; and I have no doubt that Indian nature is the same, North or South."

"Then the chances are that they will see you when you start in the morning, and will either kill or capture you."

A serious look came over Dick's face.

"I must speak to the colonel about that," he said; "it won't do to let Miss Fannie expose herself to great danger, just to be of assistance to me and help my plans."

"You are right, Dick," said Sam Sanderson; "she is too brave and beautiful to be exposed to danger. We owe her a debt of gratitude, and that would be a poor way to pay it."

The colonel came out on the piazza just then and Dick approached him and broached the subject of the Indians, and asked his opinion of the matter.

The colonel looked sober and knitted his brows.

"I declare, I had forgotten about the Indians!" he said.

"I think it will be best not to let your daughter make the trip, colonel," said Dick; "I wouldn't have her get into trouble for the world."

"Fannie will hate to give up the idea of going," the colonel said; "and I don't really believe it will be necessary, after all."

"You don't?" doubtfully.

"No; I'll tell you what we can do."

"What?"

"Your 'Liberty Boys' can accompany the carriage a few miles on its way."

"But the Indians may attack it after the 'Liberty Boys' turn back."

"I don't think there will be any danger of that."

"You don't?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"For the reason that the Seminole Indians have no horses with which to follow, and they would be unable to overtake you if they tried."

"Ah, I understand."

"Yes, I think it will be safe to make the trip as we have figured on doing."

"Well, you may do as you like about the matter, colonel, but I assure you I would prefer to go alone, and take my chances rather than run your daughter into danger."

"That's all right, Mr. Slater, but I don't think she will be in much danger, if any."

At supper the matter was broached to Fannie, and she thought as her father did, that there would be little if any danger and she was not willing to give up the idea of making the trip. Seeing that they were determined, Dick gave in, and did not make any more objections.

Early next morning the carriages set out. There was a colored driver in the driver's seat, up in front, and in the carriage were Miss Fannie, her black maid and Dick, blacked up as a negro. Riding in front, behind and at either side of the carriage were the "Liberty Boys."

CHAPTER V.

DANGER FOR MISS FANNIE.

Fortunately for the first five or six miles of the journey the road lay through the open country. There was timber to the westward, but it did not come closer than a quarter mile of the road at any point, so there was no danger of an ambush by the Indians. All that it was necessary to do was to be on guard against a sudden rush by the redskins, and the youths were in readiness for any such action.

The Indians were there, in the edge of the timber, keeping their eyes on the party and moving along so as to keep nearly even with it. As the driver urged the horses to a swift gait, however, the Indians gradually fell behind. They could have kept up and would have done so had they known that the party of horsemen did not intend going far, and would have attacked the carriage after it was left alone; but they did not know this, and so as they did not have a strong enough party to risk making a rush upon the horsemen, they paused.

They kept their eyes on the party, however, and when after the horsemen had gone a mile or so farther they

were seen to stop and turn back, the anger and discomfiture of the Indians knew no bounds.

They understood the matter now and were angry at themselves for not having suspected it in the first place. It would be impossible for them to overtake the carriage now, so they made up their minds to try to do the horsemen some damage. They made their way back to a point where the timber came to within three hundred yards of the road, and here they paused and got ready for the work they had determined upon.

The chief gave his braves instructions. They were to wait till the white horsemen were almost even with them and then they were to rush out of the timber and straight toward the whites. They were to watch closely, and when they saw the white men were on the point of firing they were to drop down at full length in the grass. It was hoped that they would be within arrow-shot distance of the enemy, then, and they would give the white men a volley or two and then retreat to the shelter of the timber.

Had the Indians had ordinary men to deal with they might have been successful and killed a number of the whites; but the "Liberty Boys" were almost to a man well skilled in woodcraft, and possessed of a full knowledge of the ways of the redmen of the forest. As they drew near the point where the timber came so close to the road, Bob Estabrook said to his comrades:

"Cock your muskets and hold them in readiness for instant use, boys. I would be willing to wager a goodly sum that we will see some Indians at that point of timber."

"I think you are right, Bob," said Mark Morrison, and the others said the same.

They cocked their muskets and held them in such a position that they could be brought to the shoulder almost instantly.

Onward they rode and every eye was on the point of timber, watching for some sign of the redskins whom all believed to be there.

Closer and closer they drew, and when they were almost even with the point of timber a horde of whooping, yelling Indians leaped out from among the trees and came rushing toward the "Liberty Boys."

"Give them a volley, boys!" roared Bob, and up came the muskets quick as a flash.

Crash—roar!

The "Liberty Boys" were splendid shots, and the volley did terrible execution, at least a score of the Indians going down, dead and wounded.

So great was the astonishment of the redskins at the

quickness with which this had been done that they stopped in horrified amazement and stood, staring.

"Charge the scoundrels!" roared Bob, and the youths whirled their horses and dashed at the Indians with the speed and force of a hurricane, yelling like mad.

The Indians had not drawn any arrows as yet; their intention was to run out quite a ways and drop down, and then draw the arrows and fire upon the whites; and now when they saw the white horsemen dashing at them with such terrible speed, they turned and fled back toward the timber with the speed of startled fawns, giving utterance as they did so to wild yells of terror.

Bob saw that they could not catch the redskins before they reached the shelter of the timber, and as once the Indians were there they would be protected by the trees and would have the advantage, he had no intention of letting this occur; so he gave the order to halt and fire a pistol volley.

The youths obeyed, and then in obedience to another order they whirled their horses and galloped back to the road, which they reached by the time the Indians had got within the shelter of the trees.

Here the youths brought their horses to a standstill and looked back. On the ground lay at least thirty Indians, dead and wounded, and the wounded ones were making the day hideous with howls of pain and anger. From among the trees, too, came angry whoops and yells from those who had not been injured and had escaped, but they were afraid to make an attack on the youths. The redskins had had a taste of the "Liberty Boys' " quality, and did not wish to try it again.

"Yell and whoop, you red scoundrels!" said Bob, grimly. "It may make you feel better, and it won't do us any harm."

The youths knew that they would not get another chance at the redskins, so they did not think it worth while fooling away any more time.

"We will return to the plantation, boys," said Bob; "forward, all!"

And the party galloped onward, reaching the mansion half an hour later without having had any more adventures.

"You were attacked by Indians?" asked the colonel, as they dismounted at the piazza.

"Yes," replied Bob, "but we quickly put the scoundrels to flight."

"I am glad of that!"

"We were on the lookout," went on Bob, "and the instant they appeared we gave them a volley and then

charged them. They were the ones taken by surprise, and did not get a chance to try to inflict any damage on us."

Dick and Miss Fannie heard the sound of the firing, and the youth knew what it meant.

"The Indians have attacked the boys!" he said.

"I judge that you are right," agreed the girl; "well, I hope that none of your brave 'Liberty Boys' will lose their lives!"

"So do I; and I do not think they will, as they were on the lookout for trouble."

The travelers met with no adventures during the trip to St. Augustine, and reached there late in the evening. They passed the sentinels without trouble, and were soon at the home of Fannie's aunt.

The good woman was surprised to see her niece earlier than was her accustomed time, but was glad to see her, and gave her a warm welcome. The girl found opportunity to tell her aunt, who was, like her brother, the colonel, a patriot, that the supposed colored man-servant was in truth a patriot spy, and asked that he be given a good room in the house instead of being sent to the servants' quarters, and, of course, the woman was only too glad to do this.

When she learned, further, who Dick really was she was considerably excited, and told him that she would do all she could to see that he was made comfortable while in her house.

"Don't worry about me, Mrs. Renfrow," smiled Dick; "I am here on business and will get along splendidly."

"I hope so."

"And so do I!" from Fannie.

"Oh, there is no doubt regarding that," said Dick; "I am much more comfortably fixed than I usually am when engaged in spy work. It is seldom that I can be quartered in a house and be free to go and come as I please, as will be the case with me here."

"Well, I want you to feel perfectly free, Mr. Slater," said the hostess; "and I hope you will succeed in learning all you wish to know, for I do not like the British."

The "Liberty Boy" had his supper sent up to his room, as he did not wish to go to the table with the blacking on, and then, after it had grown dark he left the house by the rear entrance, and made his way down the street.

He had gone but a short distance when as he was passing a building from which shone a number of lights, and on the piazza of which a number of redcoats were sitting, he was accosted by a British soldier.

"Hello, here!" the soldier exclaimed, pushing Dick back as he was about to walk on past. "Who are you?"

"W—who am I?" half stammered Dick, talking as frightened.

"Yes, who are you?"

"I—I'm Tony Black."

"Humph! Tony Black, eh?"

"Yes, sah."

"Whose nigger are you?"

"W-whose nigger is I?"

"That is what I asked."

"I—I'm Massa Hanshaw's nigger."

"Hanshaw?"

"Yes, sah."

"Who is he?"

"W'y, he's jes' Massa Hanshaw, sah. I dunno who el he am."

"Bah! Who is he? Where does he live—in St. Augustine?"

"N-no, sah; he don' lib in St. 'Gustine."

"Where does he live, then?"

"H-he done lib erway up by de St. Mary's Ribber, sah."

There was an exclamation from one of the officers, captain, judging by his uniform, sitting on the piazza, as he called out:

"Here, you nigger, come here!"

"Y-yes, sah," replied Dick, and he advanced and stood in front of the captain.

"You say you are Colonel Hanshaw's slave?" the officer asked.

"Yes, sah."

"What are you doing down here in St. Augustine?"

"I come down along uv Missy Fannie, sah."

"Ha!" exclaimed the captain. "Is Fannie Hanshaw here in St. Augustine?"

"Yes, sah."

"When did she come?"

"Dis ev'nin', sah."

"Where is she—at her aunt's?"

"Yes, sah; at Missus Renfrow's, sah."

"Is that the young lady who gave you the cold shoulder a few months ago, Raymond?" drawled one of the captain's brother officers.

"She's the young lady in question," was the cold reply.

"Well, if she is as beautiful as you say she is, I think that I shall have to go in and see if I can make an impression, Raymond. Perhaps I may be able to make an impression where you failed, as my style of beauty is different from yours."

There was a chorus of laughter at this, from all the officers. The speaker was a very homely man, and

idea of him paying suit where Raymond, who was accounted handsome, had failed, was deemed humorous.

"The girl is my property—I have sworn it!" almost hissed Captain Raymond. "And now that she has again come to St. Augustine she has played right into my hand."

The officer did not seem to think of Dick, or if he thought of him he did not care for his presence. As for Dick, he hardly knew what to think.

"It looks as if I have been the means of bringing Miss Fannie into a new and entirely unexpected danger," he said to himself; "well, Captain Raymond, you will have to put me out of the way before you will be able to harm that beautiful girl!"

"Why, what do you mean, Raymond?" asked another of the officers. "As I understand it, the girl gave you your answer—a negative—when she was here before. What, then, can you expect to do now?"

"Never you mind," was the growling reply; "I am not the man to give up so easily. I will not permit my wishes to be thwarted by the silly whim of a girl. I have set my heart on possessing Fannie Hanshaw, and I am going to possess her!"

"I'm afraid the captain has his heart set on the broad acres and myriads of slaves of the girl's father," drawled another of the officers. "They say he is the richest man in Florida, that he possesses hundreds of acres of land and at least fifteen hundred slaves."

"You need not worry about that part of it," growled Captain Raymond; "I said the girl was what I am after, and I meant what I said."

"Oh, no offense, Raymond," laughed the last speaker; "we understand that, but of course if you get the girl you will ultimately come in for the acres and the slaves."

"How long is your young mistress going to remain in St. Augustine?" asked the captain, addressing Dick.

"I dunno, sah; er week, mebbly."

"Humph! How did she come—in a carriage?"

"Yes, sah."

"Who came with her?"

"Jes' me'n de coachman an' de Missy's maid, sah."

"Her father did not come, eh?"

"No, sah."

"Very well; you may go—but, hold on," as Dick turned away; "you heard our conversation just now?"

Dick, who had paused and half turned to face the captain, nodded and said:

"Yes, sah, I done heerd hit."

"Well, listen to what I say, now, for I mean every word of it: If you repeat a single word of what was said here

just now, to your young mistress, I will kill you, just as sure as my name is Raymond! Do you understand?"

"Yes, sah."

"All right; see to it that you remember what I have said. I am a man of my word, and if you don't want to die you will keep your mouth shut!"

"I won't say er word ter de young missus, sah!"

"All right; now go, you black rascal!"

The disguised "Liberty Boy" turned and walked away, the soldier who had stopped him at first paying no attention to him.

"So that scoundrel is going to have Miss Fannie, whether she wants him to or not, is he?" Dick said to himself. "We will see! He will do nothing of the kind—no, not if I have to kill the scoundrel to keep him from bothering the girl!"

The British officer did not know it, of course, but if he had desired to accomplish his own defeat he could not have gone to work in a better way than by telling his comrades his intentions regarding the girl, in the hearing of the supposed negro, who was really Dick Slater.

The youth made his way about, taking in everything with his keen, experienced eyes. He saw the fortifications and sized up the strength of the British in a thorough manner.

"I believe it will be possible to make a successful attack on this place," he said to himself; "I have not the least doubt regarding the matter."

Two hours later he returned to the Renfrow house, and as he approached he met Captain Raymond just coming away.

The officer scowled at Dick as they met, and as they passed each other he hissed out:

"Remember what I said about your not telling your mistress what you heard me say, you black scoundrel!"

"Oh, yes, sah; I'll remember, sah," Dick replied. And to himself he said:

"I'll remember you, Captain Raymond; and if you try any mean tricks you will find that you will be in trouble very quickly!"

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTAIN RAYMOND.

Captain Raymond had indeed been to the Renfrow house when Dick met him. The officer, soon after the discussion at the piazza, had gone to his room and donned his brightest uniform and then left the house and made his way to

the Renfrow home. He had been there before, and walked up to the door with assurance, and knocked.

The door was opened presently and a negro servant appeared. The captain pushed past the servant without ceremony, and as he made his way in the direction of the library, he said, curtly:

"Send Miss Fannie Hanshaw to the library at once, you black wench!"

"Yes, sah; yes, massa!" was the reply. The negress stood in terror and awe of the redcoats, and her eyes rolled wildly as she hastened to Fannie's room and told her there was a "gemmen" in the library, and that he wished to see her.

"Who is he?" asked Fannie.

"I dunno whut his name is, Missy Fannie."

"What does he look like?"

"Oh, he's one ob dem redcoated sojers, Missy Fannie."

The girl started.

"Ah, so it is a British soldier, is it?" she remarked.

"Yes, Missy Fannie; he's all dressed up an' hez a great big sword on."

"An officer! I wonder who he can be? Surely Captain Raymond would not dare call after what I told him the last time I was here."

There was no use speculating, however, so Fannie told the colored woman to tell the caller that she would be there in a few minutes. The woman bowed and went downstairs.

"Missy Fannie'll done be heah in er few minnets, massa," she said at the open door of the library, and then went about her work.

A few minutes later Fannie Hanshaw appeared in the library, and as she saw who her visitor was, she started back, and gave utterance to an exclamation of anger and dismay.

"Captain Raymond!" The name slipped from her lips unconsciously, and there was such a tone of dismay to the voice that the officer was rendered angry thereby, but he preserved an outward show of composure, and bowing low, said:

"At your services, Miss Fannie."

"My name is 'Miss Hanshaw'!" exclaimed the girl, the hot blood of anger surging to her brow.

"I am aware of that fact," was the cool, almost insolent reply.

"Then why don't you address me in that way? By what right do you address me by my given name?"

"By the right which being an old friend accords me, Miss Fannie."

"But you said the last time I was in St. Augustine, and

the last time I saw you, that we would henceforth be enemies."

"I know I did, Miss Fannie," suavely; "but I was disappointed—you know what I was disappointed about—and angry, and spoke without due consideration."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, I was sorry for what I said, very soon, but you went home and I had no chance to tell you so."

"That was too bad."

There was not much of graciousness in the girl's tone, and the officer noted the fact, and a bitter feeling of rage rose up in his heart. He managed to control himself, however, so as not to let his feelings be shown on his face.

"Indeed, it was too bad, Miss Fannie; and you have no idea how I regretted my hasty words."

"You did regret them, then?"

"Yes, indeed; and I hastened here as soon as I learned you were in St. Augustine, to tell you how sorry I am that I spoke in such fashion, then, and to try to renew our old friendship."

The girl shook her head.

"I do not think it would be wise to do anything of the kind, Captain Raymond," was the reply.

"You do not?" There was disappointment and suppressed anger in the tone.

"No; I shall be glad to call you friend, however, but as for the rest I prefer that you should not begin calling to see me as you were wont to do when I was here before."

"Oh, you are willing to call me a friend, but are unwilling to treat me as one, eh?" The captain almost hissed the words.

"I simply prefer that you do not call on me, sir; that is all."

"Oh, that's all, is it?"

"Yes."

"And I am to be barred from your society, while my brother officers, will, I suppose, be allowed to call as often as they choose!"

"That is as it may be, sir," was the cold reply; "I deny your right to have anything to say regarding my actions, or with regard to who shall call on me and who shall not."

"Oh, indeed?"

"Yes."

"And this is to be my last call, is it?"

"I prefer that it shall be so, Captain Raymond."

The officer leaped to his feet and a snarl not unlike that of a wild beast escaped him.

"Very well; so be it!" he cried. "I will go and I will not return again, but I warn you, Miss Hanshaw, that the

"It will come when you will regret your action in this matter."

"You must be a very brave man, Captain Raymond!" There was biting sarcasm in the tone, but the captain was so angry that he did not notice it, and he said:

"Why so?"

"Because you dare threaten a woman!"

The captain understood now, and a muttered curse escaped his lips.

"It is lucky for you that you are a woman!" he hissed, his face working with rage.

"Why so, captain?"

"Because if you were a man I would kill you!"

"You might, and then again you might not," was the reply; "but now, captain, I will bid you good even—" and the girl left the room and went upstairs to her room.

The officer, angry and baffled, left the room and the se, giving the servant a terrible fright at the door by threatening to cut her head off for being slow in getting the door open.

"Foah de goodness sake, but dat sojer man is mighty brit lookin' an' talkin'!" gasped the woman as the captain darted down the piazza steps and hastened away. "Ah, comes dat nigger dat come down heah wid Missy Fannie, an' whut is too stuck up ter 'sociate wid us cullud s. I've er good min' ter not let 'im in!"

She thought better of it, however, as she saw the captain say something to the "stuck-up nigger." She wanted to learn what it was that the captain had said. She held the door open and as Dick entered she said:

"What did dat sojer man say ter yo', yo' nigger Tony?"

"Oh, nothin' much, aunty," replied Dick.

"I know better dan dat!" angrily. "What did he say ter yo', yo' brack raskal?"

The youth could hardly keep from laughing, but he managed to keep his face straight, and lowering his voice, seriously, he said: "I'll tell yo', aunty, ef yo' won't nobuddy else."

"All right; I won't tell nobuddy, Tony. What did he say?"

"He said that he was in love wid yo', aunty!" said Dick, shyly.

The negress stared in open-mouthed amazement.

"What's dat yo' say, yo' brack raskal?" she gasped.

"I say de sojer man said dat he wuz in love wid yo', Tony," repeated Dick, solemnly; "an' he said, too, dat ef yo' wouldn't marry 'im he'd go off somewhurs an' kill 'er ef!"

"Go 'long, yo' lyin' lump ob charcoal!" the negress cried, and she attempted to cuff Dick's ears, but he dodged and ran along the hall and up to his room, leaving the angry negress to sputter at the walls. Later on, down in the kitchen, she told her companions that she thought the negro who came with "Missy Fannie" was "too smart an' stuck up ter lib!"

Fannie intercepted Dick in the hallway and asked him what success he had had, and he told her that he had very good success, indeed, and that he had learned quite a good deal regarding the strength of the force under the British, and also the strength of the fortifications.

"I learned something else, too, Miss Fannie," he said in conclusion.

"What, Mr. Slater?"

"I learned that you have an enemy in St. Augustine."

"You did?"

"Yes."

Fannie thought she knew who the enemy referred to was, but she asked:

"Who is this enemy?"

"I think he is an ex-suitor for your hand, Miss Fannie. He is a British officer—one Captain Raymond."

The girl nodded.

"I judge that you are right," she said; "he was a suitor for my hand when I was here last, but I sent him away, and he was very angry and threatened me; but he called this evening—has just been here—and apologized for the way he had talked and wanted to renew our acquaintanceship."

"I met him, and judged he had been here. But what did you tell him?"

"That while I was willing to look upon him as a friend, I did not wish to have him resume his former habit of calling on me."

"Ah! and what did he say to that?"

"He was angry."

"I judged that he had not met with the reception he wished for, by the way he looked."

"He was very angry and threatened that I would see the day that I would be sorry for treating him as I did."

The youth shook his head.

"He is a bad man, Miss Fannie."

"I am sure of that, Mr. Slater."

"And unless I am mistaken, he is a dangerous man."

"Yes, he may be; but what can he do?"

The youth pondered a few moments.

"I really don't know what he could do, Miss Fannie; but you must remember that he has a very good oppor-

tunity to do something, if he wishes to, for the British have full control here and could even make you a prisoner and carry you off and hold you till you were willing to agree to marry him in order to secure your freedom from imprisonment."

"I would never agree to do that; no, I would die first!"

"I'll tell you what I think, Miss Fannie, and that is this: That it will be best for you not to remain here long."

"You think I had better go back home?"

"Yes, as soon as you can do so without attracting too much attention; say at the end of three or four days."

"Do you think it so serious a matter, Mr. Slater?"

"I do, Miss Fannie," and then Dick told the girl what he had heard the captain say.

"I will be ready to go whenever you are ready," the girl said; "go ahead with your spy work, and when you have secured all the information you think you will need, we will return."

"Then we will start back day after to-morrow morning, for I am sure that I shall be able to learn all that I will need to know, to-day and to-night."

"Very well."

"How will you account to your aunt for making such a short visit?"

"Oh, I will tell her the truth, as she is in sympathy with the patriot cause, you know."

"True; I had forgotten that for the moment. Then it will be simple enough."

"Yes, though the British may wonder why I came so far for such a short visit."

"We will have to risk that."

"So we will."

Then the two separated and went to their rooms. Dick pondered the situation, and the more he thought of it the more eager he was that Fannie should get started for home.

"I should never forgive myself if she should get into serious trouble as a result of her coming here to aid me in my work," he said to himself; "she is a brave and noble-hearted girl, and I will see to it that no harm comes to her if I have to yield up my life in doing so!"

CHAPTER VII.

DICK REACHES THE PLANTATION SAFELY.

During the most of the following day Dick blacked up so that the closest inspection would not have revealed the

fact that he was a white man, and made his way hither and thither, through the encampment of the British. He was everywhere and got many a reprimand from sentinel soldiers and officers, but he only laughed, showing as if a set of ivories as ever any negro owned, said, "'Scuse massa," and went on his way.

The youth learned all that it was necessary for him to learn that day, and he felt that if Miss Fannie succeeded in getting away next morning without being interfered with, his trip to St. Augustine might be set down as a great success in every respect.

After supper, and just as it was coming dark, Dick went out again in the hope that he might overhear the conversation of some of the British officers, and thus gain a few added points of information, and as he was passing what he had noticed that day as being a vacant house, he heard voices. The house was near the outskirts of the encampment, and was a small affair, a mere shell, consisting of more than two or three rooms. Wondering who the persons in the old house could be, Dick crept up close, and placing his ear to a crack, listened intently.

The first words he heard aroused his deepest interest, and he listened eagerly. The words were spoken by Captain Raymond, as Dick knew by the voice, and were as follows:

"So the girl starts home in the morning, does she?"

"Yes," was the reply, in a voice which Dick did not recognize.

"Very good; then there is my opportunity to get into my power."

"How will you work it, captain?"

"Easily enough: We will leave here after midnight, to-night, and will ride halfway to the St. Mary's River, and there go into camp and await the coming of the girl's marriage. When it reaches there we will stop it, make the girl a prisoner and will take her to the cabin in the time—our headquarters when out engaged upon our regular work of robbing the people and stealing slaves."

"That is a good scheme, captain."

"I think so," in a tone of satisfaction.

"But what are you going to do with the girl?"

"I'm going to try to get her to agree to marry me."

"I see; but supposing she won't agree to it?"

"Then I shall send word to her father that she is his prisoner, and unless he comes down with five thousand pounds, the girl will be killed!"

"Ah, I see! That's a fine scheme, captain!"

"I think so; I will win either way."

"So you will."

"Yes; but I wonder what made her take such a sudden notion to go back home?"

"I don't know."

"I think I know; that blasted black scoundrel that I liked to last night, told her what I said."

"That is it, likely."

"I have no doubt of it; I would like to get a chance the black rascal. I'd run him through!"

"Oh, you would, would you?" thought Dick, with a smile. "Well, I will see to it that you don't get the chance though even if you were to get the chance I would be freed to disappoint you. I do not intend to permit myself to be run through by a British officer, if I can help it, and I think that I will be able to do so."

The inmates of the old house talked for some time longer, but not much of interest was said, save that Dick learned that the "band," as it was called by the captain, its leader, consisted of ten men.

Having learned this much, Dick was eager to be away. He felt that there was work for him to do and he must do it. He had no time to lose.

"I must get a horse and slip out of St. Augustine as soon as possible, and ride to Colonel Hanshaw's plantation and get back to the point where the captain and his men will be, with a sufficient number of my 'Liberty Boys' to overcome the scoundrels!" was what Dick said to himself. He hastened back to the Renfrow house, and, entering, found Fannie and her aunt in the library. He told them what he had learned, and exclamations of amazement escaped their lips, while Mrs. Renfrow turned pale.

"I am afraid for you to start home, Fannie!" she said. "You had better give up the idea and decide to remain here longer, and then the captain may give up his idea of making you a prisoner."

"No, he won't give up the idea," said Dick, "and I think it will be safest and best for Miss Fannie to start home in the morning, as she has arranged to do."

"Why not steal a march on the captain by slipping away to-night, within the hour, Mr. Slater?" asked the girl, eagerly.

"For the reason that they have a watch set on the house, and if you did so it would only hasten the thing you are trying to avoid. They would ride on ahead and stop you, they figure on doing to-morrow."

"Then what will we do? You will not be able to fight them off alone, Mr. Slater."

"No, I have a better plan than that, Miss Fannie."

"Ah! What is it?"

"I am going to find a horse and slip away and ride post-

haste to your father's plantation, get a lot of my 'Liberty Boys' and hasten back and be on hand when the captain and his men put in an appearance and try to stop your carriage and make you a prisoner."

"Do you think you can do that in safety, Mr. Slater?"

"Oh, yes; all that is necessary is that I get a horse."

"We have several, and you may take one of them, Mr. Slater," said Mrs. Renfrow.

"Thank you; that will do nicely."

"I fear you will not be able to get through the British lines in safety," said Fannie, with an anxious look on her face.

"You need have no fears," said Dick; "I have been looking the ground over very carefully to-day and have found a point where I can get out and away in safety, I am sure."

"I am glad of that; and I hope you will succeed!"

"I will succeed; I must succeed, for your safety depends upon my doing so."

The girl shuddered slightly.

"Ugh!" she said; "how I should hate to be captured by Captain Raymond!"

"It would not be pleasant," agreed Dick.

They talked for half an hour longer and came to a full understanding regarding what was to be done, and then Dick bade the two good-by and left the house. He went to the stable, and when one of the horses had been saddled and bridled he mounted and rode slowly away.

He took a roundabout course, keeping out of the way of the points where he would be likely to encounter red-coats, and finally reached the limits of the encampment. He was just congratulating himself on having got away without arousing suspicion when he was challenged from in front:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"A friend," replied Dick.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign," the sentinel commanded.

The youth rode up till within a few feet of the sentinel and brought his horse to a stop. It was pretty dark, but the outlines of the sentinel's form could be seen.

"I was not given the countersign," said Dick.

"You were not?" in surprise.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I don't know; I guess General Prevost forgot it."

"The general?"

"Yes; I am going into the country on some special business for him."

"You are?"

"Yes, on business of such importance that it was think-

ing of it and instructing me with regard to it, that caused the general to forget to give me the countersign, I judge."

"Humph! Who are you?"

"A special messenger; and it is desirable that I hasten. Do not delay me here or the general will be angry."

"But he ought to have given you the countersign. I will be doing only my duty in holding you here."

"I know that; but you know what kind of a man he is. He will not hold himself to blame at all, but will blame you for not knowing enough to let me pass, and I pity you, that's all. If you were to receive approval and compliments for doing what is really your duty, it would be different; but instead of that you will have all the wrath of the general poured out upon your head."

"I don't know but you are right," the sentinel said.

"Of course I am, and if I were in your shoes I would not think of delaying a special messenger of General Prevost's."

"I guess I won't do so, either."

"You are wise; well, as I have already lost several precious minutes, I will hasten onward. Good night."

"Good night!"

The sentinel stepped aside and Dick urged the horse forward. He rode at a walk for a few minutes, and then reaching the main road, urged the horse to a gallop and rode rapidly.

"Now, then, for a long and hard ride," thought the youth; "I will have to look out for Indians, too. I am likely to encounter some of the red fiends when I get up in the vicinity of the colonel's plantation."

The "Liberty Boy" rode steadily for hours, and then made up his mind that he must be within a few miles of the plantation.

"From now on till I reach the plantation I will need to keep my eyes and ears open," he said to himself; "doubtless some of the Indians are lurking in the vicinity."

Onward he rode. His musket was held in readiness for instant use, and his pistols were where they could be seized upon the instant.

On and on, and presently he was enabled to make out where he was. He passed a clump of bushes and scrubby trees which he remembered to have seen before, and which he knew was within three miles of the plantation.

"I'll soon be there," the youth said to himself; "I hope that I will not be discovered by the Indians."

Futile hope! As the thought was in his mind, out from the clump of brush and scrubby trees rushed a horde of yelling Indians.

The youth spoke sharply to his horse, and dropped for-

ward on the animal's neck. The horse leaped forward in a run, the yells of the Indians having frightened it, and the same instant a flight of arrows came hurtling through the air.

None of the missiles struck Dick, but one hit the horse, not injuring him sufficiently so but he could continue at full speed, and the redskins were quickly left behind.

The youth soon reached the plantation and pounded on the gate. It took quite a lot of pounding to awaken the gate-keeper, but finally this was accomplished, and the gate swung open, and Dick rode through.

He rode at once to the mansion, alighted and tied his horse, and advancing to the front door pounded upon it loudly.

Presently the door was opened and Dick entered, saying to the sleepy servant: "Arouse your master at once; I am Dick Slater, and I wish to see him. I will go to my room and wash this blacking off my face, and will then come down to the library."

"Yes, sah; yes, Massa Slater," was the reply.

The youth lighted a candle from the one in the servant's hand, and made his way up to the room he had occupied. He entered and quickly washed the blacking off his face, and then made his way down to the library. Here he found Colonel Hanshaw, who greeted him eagerly but somewhat anxiously.

"What does this mean, Mr. Slater?" he asked. "Why have you returned so soon and alone? Has anything happened to my daughter?"

"No, nothing has happened to her as yet, Colonel Hanshaw," was the reply; "and it was to make sure that nothing should happen to her that I have come back so soon and alone."

"Explain!"

"I will do so."

The youth quickly explained everything, and when he had finished the colonel said:

"I remember Fannie said she had been bothered by the attentions of a British officer the last time she was at aunt's. I had forgotten it, and I suppose she had also."

"Likely; until he again presented himself and wanted to renew his attentions."

"Yes; well, what are your plans for preventing this scoundrelly redcoat from making a success of his nefarious scheme?"

"My idea is to take my 'Liberty Boys' and ride off toward St. Augustine, and be on hand when the captain makes his attempt to capture your daughter."

"That is a good plan. There are only about a dozen of scoundrels, you say?"

"That is what I understood them to say when I overheard them talking in the deserted house."

"Judging by what you tell me you heard them say, they must be a sort of an outlaw band, robbing, murdering and killing."

"You are right, sir."

"There has been considerable of such work going on at about half way between here and St. Augustine, for some time past, and I judge that this is the band that has been doing the work."

"Without doubt."

"Well, then, if you succeed in wiping them out—killing the last one of them, you will be doing a good thing, I should say!"

"So I think; and we will do it, too, if they show fight."

"When will you start?"

"I think we might as well start as soon as we can get ready, so as to be sure of getting there in time."

"As you will only have to go half way, however, there is no need for haste," said the colonel.

"True; well, I will get the 'Liberty Boys' up and we will be ready and start in an hour or so."

"I will order a lunch prepared for you," the colonel said; "you had better eat a bite before you start, and then you will be plenty with you."

"Very well."

The colonel summoned a servant.

"Arouse all the young men who are guests here," he ordered; "tell them to assemble in the library as soon as they are ready."

"Yes, sah; yes, Massa Cunnel."

The servant hastened away, and then the colonel summoned another and ordered that luncheon be furnished for a hundred. The servant stared in surprise, but hastened away to call up more servants and do the work ordered to be done.

Twenty minutes later the "Liberty Boys" came pouring into the library, and when they saw Dick, exclamations of amazement escaped their lips.

"Where did you come from?"

"How did you get here?"

"I thought you were in St. Augustine!"

"When did you come?"

"And what's up, anyway, Dick?" this from Bob Estabrook.

"We have some work to do, Bob," was Dick's reply.

"Some work to do, eh?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

The youth went to work and told, in as few words as possible, the same story he had told Colonel Hanshaw. When he had finished, exclamations escaped the lips of the youths.

"We'll fix that scoundrel of a captain!"

"We'll make him wish he had not tried any tricks!"

"That's what we will!"

"We'll exterminate the gang!"

There was no doubting the eagerness and determination of the "Liberty Boys." They had taken a great fancy to Fannie Hanshaw, the colonel's beautiful daughter, and would have been willing to fight the entire British army for her sake, and to save her from danger; so the thought of foiling a dozen outlaws was mere sport.

"How soon will we start, Dick?" asked Bob.

"Oh, within the next two hours. There is no hurry, as we will have to go only about twenty miles."

The youths talked the matter over till luncheon was announced, and then they went to the dining-room and ate heartily. Then they went out and bridled and saddled their horses and got everything in readiness for the start.

The negro servants had put up one hundred nice, individual lunches, and these the "Liberty Boys" placed in the saddle-bags.

Then bidding the colonel good-by, and telling him not to worry about the safety of his daughter, they rode through the gateway and down the road.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE "LIBERTY BOYS" SHOW THEIR GRATITUDE.

At almost the same time that the "Liberty Boys" rode out of the gateway at Colonel Hanshaw's plantation, a little band of horsemen rode out of St. Augustine and headed toward the north. There were ten men in the party, and they were Captain Raymond and his men.

They rode slowly and in silence till they were well out of St. Augustine, and then they urged their horses to a gallop and rode at a fair gait for an hour. Then they slowed down to a walk to let the horses rest a bit and fell to conversing.

"Do you think the girl's father will come down with the five thousand pounds if we succeed in making a prisoner

of his daughter?" asked one of the men, addressing Captain Raymond.

"I'm sure he will."

"I guess he will; if he thinks much of her he will."

"Oh, I guess he thinks a lot of her. The plan will work, I am sure—though I would prefer to marry the girl, for I have really taken a liking to her."

"That wouldn't suit the rest of us so well," was the reply.

"You'd get your share of the plunder in time."

"Oh, yes; but it might be too long a time to wait."

"I guess not; the colonel is an old man and likely to drop off at any time."

"And if he wouldn't be accommodating and drop off it would be a simple matter to render him assistance—eh, captain?" with a laugh.

"You are right; I could do that—and would, if he insisted on hanging onto the thread of life too tenaciously."

The officer said this in such a cold, calm and matter-of-fact tone that it was evident he meant every word of it. It was plain that he was a cruel-hearted, merciless fiend.

"Well, I guess it will be a good investment of time and labor, whichever way the matter is decided, captain."

"I think so. It will not need to interfere with our regular work, at all."

The horses were again urged to a gallop, and conversation ceased for the time being.

Onward the outlaw band rode for perhaps three hours and then it halted, and after searching the timber for a few rods, along the roadside, a pathway was found and into this they rode and made their way along a distance of a mile, when they came upon a log cabin standing in the midst of a tangled lot of undergrowth and bushes.

The men dismounted, tied their horses, and entering the cabin, threw themselves down upon their blankets on the rough floor and were soon asleep.

When they awoke it was broad daylight, and the captain, who had a watch, said it was nine o'clock.

"We will eat a bite, boys," he said, "and then we will make our way over to the road and lie in wait for the carriage. I don't expect it along much before noon, but it will be as well to be there in plenty of time."

"Yes, it will be better to be there too early than too late," said one of the men.

"You are right."

They ate a frugal meal and then set out on foot, leaving their horses behind. They soon reached the road and hid themselves in the bushes bordering the highway and settled themselves down to take things easy while waiting.

It was a few minutes past eleven o'clock when one of the men lifted himself on one elbow and said:

"Hist! I hear wheels!"

All listened and then the captain rose cautiously and peered down the road. He could hear the sound of wheels, but could not see the vehicle, owing to the fact that there was a bend in the road a short distance away.

Presently the carriage came in sight around the bend, however, and the captain gave the men a signal. They took masks from their pockets and placed them over their faces, as it was the officer's intention to let the driver go on to Colonel Hanshaw's plantation after the girl had been secured, and he did not wish it known who he and his men were.

When this had been accomplished they waited till the carriage was almost opposite them, and then at a signal from the captain they leaped forth from among the bushes and bounded out into the road in front of the horse and weapons in hand.

"Halt, you black rascal!" roared the captain. "Halt, you are a dead nigger!"

The "Liberty Boys" rode steadily onward for perhaps two hours, after leaving the plantation, and Dick congratulated himself that they were making very good progress. Another hour passed and the youth made up his mind that they had gone far enough for the present.

"We will stop here and wait till daylight before going on," he said; "we do not want to go too far toward Augustine."

So the youths dismounted, tied their horses, threw themselves down on their blankets and rested till daylight.

When it grew light enough so that it was possible to see plainly, Dick rose and looked about him, for the purpose of trying to make out where they were. He looked all around and found that everything looked new and strange to him. He could not understand this, for it was a peculiarity of his that when he had once gone over a road he was always able to see something that he would remember as having been seen before; but in this instance he was unable to do so.

"I don't understand it," he finally remarked, speaking his thoughts aloud.

"Don't understand what, Dick?"

"Why, I don't see anything in the landscape or scenery anywhere that is at all familiar, Bob. Everything looks new and strange to me."

Bob looked surprised, and a bit startled.

"You don't think we are on the wrong road, do you?" he asked.

"don't know for certain; but I am afraid so!"

"Jove! that would be bad!"

"So it would."

"But we may not be; if you move along the road a little likely you will see something familiar that will prove you that we are on the right road."

"We will make the test, at any rate; and if we are on the wrong road then we must hasten to get back onto the right one, for it would be terrible if we were to fail to be there and when Captain Raymond and his gang stop the stage."

"So it would."

The "Liberty Boys" had all heard the conversation and were on their feet ready for action; so a few minutes later they were in the saddle and riding slowly along, down the road. Dick was in the lead and was scanning trees, rocks, and hills at both sides in an attempt to find something that looked familiar. When they had gone a mile, however, he stopped his horse, half turned in the saddle, and, looking back, said:

"We are on the wrong road, boys!"

"Are you sure, Dick?" asked Bob, a blank look on his face.

"Yes, I'm certain of it, Bob."

"You haven't seen anything that looks familiar, eh?"

"Not a thing. I have never been along this road before."

"Jove! that is bad news!"

"So it is."

"What are we to do?"

"Well, there is only one thing to do and that is to right about face and ride back and try to find where we left the St. Augustine road."

"I guess that is the best thing to do."

"Yes; I'll take the lead and you boys follow me."

"All right."

All turned their horses and Dick took the lead and rode the road at a gallop, the rest following. As he dashed forward the youth kept a sharp lookout for the road they had tried to find.

Onward for two hours they rode and they were all beginning to feel alarmed lest they should fail to reach the place where the band was to hold up the carriage in time to save Fannie Hanshaw from being made a prisoner.

Presently they came to a little log cabin standing beside the road, and Dick halted and called to a youth of sixteen or seventeen years, who was standing in the yard.

"Come here, young fellow," Dick cried; "I wish to ask you a few questions."

The youth advanced to the fence, though evidently some-

what dubious regarding the wisdom of doing so, for he kept a wary and half-frightened eye on the "Liberty Boys."

"Whut d'ye wanter know, mister?" he asked.

"I wish to know how far it is from here to the main road leading southward to St. Augustine."

"Ye mean ther road clus' ter Cunnel Hanshaw's plantation?"

"Yes."

"Waal," scratching his head, "ef ye go back up this road ther way ye air goin' ye'll strike et erbout three miles from here; but ererost, through ther timber et hain't more'n ha'f er mile."

"And could horses get through the timber?" asked Dick, eagerly.

"Yas, ef ye knowed ther way. Theer's er path."

"Show us the way, my boy, and I'll give you two shillings."

The youth's eyes brightened.

"Reel silver shillin's?" he queried.

"Yes."

"All right; I'll do et. Jes' foller me an' I'll git ye ereross ter the other road mighty quick."

The boy crossed the road and entered a path, the "Liberty Boys" following. The path wound and twisted around, and was somewhat hard to follow on horseback, but five minutes later the other road was reached.

"Ah! this looks more like it!" exclaimed Dick, who saw several objects near at hand that looked familiar; "this is the right road, sure enough, boys!"

Then he drew a couple of silver pieces from his pocket and tossed them to the boy, who caught them dexterously and gazed at them delightedly.

"One question before you go, my boy," said Dick. "How far is it from here to Colonel Hanshaw's plantation?"

"'Bout five miles, mister," was the reply.

"And it is nine o'clock at the least!" exclaimed Dick. "Boys, we will have to ride for all our horses are worth!"

Then Dick set out down the road at a gallop, and behind him came the "Liberty Boys." There was an anxious look on the face of each and every one, for they realized that it was possible that they might be too late in getting to the point where the outlaw band was to hold up the carriage.

"We'll get there in time if we have to almost kill our horses trying!" said Dick to himself, grimly, and he urged his horse from a gallop to a run, the other youths doing likewise.

It was a wild ride, but the exigencies of the occasion

demanding it, and the "Liberty Boys" were the youths to do what was required, regardless of consequences.

Onward they dashed and although the road was rough in places and not suited for speed, they managed to make very good time on the whole, and they rounded a bend in the road and came in sight of the carriage containing Fannie Hanshaw just as it was brought to a stop by the driver, on order from Captain Raymond, as already told.

The youths saw that they were in time, but only just in time, and they dashed forward, eager to strike the gang, a blow that would practically end its career as a band before the members knew what was happening.

The "Liberty Boys" were determined that the outlaws should not carry off the daughter of the man who had befriended them, and leaping from their horses, when close upon the band, and rushing forward, they opened fire.

One volley was all that was necessary. The youths were good shots, and the redcoat outlaws were riddled with bullets and fell dead or dying, to a man.

Not one escaped death, but they richly merited it, for they had, in their work of robbery, pillage and outlawry, murdered many innocent men, women and even children. Indeed, the easy death by bullet was really too good for them; they should have been hanged.

Fannie Hanshaw had been frightened somewhat when the outlaws put in an appearance, and there was no sign of the "Liberty Boys," but their sudden appearance and the utter extinguishment of the outlaws put a new face on matters, and she climbed out of the carriage and greeted Dick and the other youths joyously.

"I'm so glad you got here!" she cried. "I feared you had been captured or had in some way failed of reaching the plantation, Mr. Slater."

"No, I got there in safety, Miss Fannie," was the reply; "but we started out in the night and got off the road, and were delayed in getting back and reaching here. We were afraid that we might be too late, but we were not."

After a few minutes of conversation Dick assisted the girl to re-enter the carriage and instructed the negro driver to drive up the road a couple of hundred yards.

"We will remain behind and bury the bodies of the dead men, Miss Fannie," said Dick.

This was done, and when the work had been finished the question came up of whether or not they should take time to look for the hiding place of the redcoat outlaws. It was decided to do so, and Dick told Fannie she might as well stop where they were and eat luncheon, and himself and comrades would make search for the cabin hiding place or rendezvous of the outlaws.

Fannie fell in with this proposition at once, and leaving a dozen of the "Liberty Boys" to guard her and protect her from possible danger, Dick and the rest made their way through the timber, following a path which had been found.

They found the cabin and the horses of the outlaws. The cabin was all kinds of plunder, such as would be found in the homes of the rich planters of the vicinity, and this was loaded on the horses of the dead outlaws.

"We will take this plunder to Colonel Hanshaw's plantation," said Dick; "and it may be that some of it will be returned to the rightful owners."

"True," said Bob; "and what cannot be returned to the rightful owners can be given to the black people."

They set out and were soon back where the carriage stood. The horses were hitched up at once, Fannie got in the carriage, and the party set out, reaching the plantation about five o'clock.

To say the colonel was delighted when he saw his daughter back in safety, is stating the matter too mildly; he was overjoyed and tried to thank Dick and the "Liberty Boys" for what they had done, but they would not listen to him.

"Don't say a word," smiled Dick; "don't try to thank us. We owe you a great debt of gratitude, and we do not consider that we have paid it at all in doing what we have done. Your daughter went into danger in order to aid me in my work of spying on the British."

"Well, we think that you have shown your gratitude sufficiently in what you have done," said the colonel, and Fannie said the same.

Dick, who was a keen-eyed fellow, thought he saw signs of a mutual liking existing between Harold Somers, one of the handsomest and bravest of the "Liberty Boys," and Fannie; and he did his best to encourage them by throwing the two together as much as possible during the next two or three days which were spent at the plantation. He hoped that the affair would ripen into love, and that the two would become engaged, and this was what really did happen—to the great joy of the majority of the "Liberty Boys." There were a few who did not look joyful at first, for they had fallen victims to the wonderful beauty of the girl, themselves. They were manly fellows, however, and did not begrudge their comrade his good fortune. To the contrary, they congratulated him.

Dick returned to Savannah and reported to General Howe, and the patriot officer advanced upon Florida, with a goodly army. He reached the St. Mary's River, but the men had drunk so much bad water that they were tal-

own to the number of hundreds by fever, and many of them died; and he decided, reluctantly, to give up the idea of attacking the British at St. Augustine, and retreated back to Savannah.

The "Liberty Boys" had remained at the plantation, and Dick, instead of returning with General Howe's army, crossed the river and made his way to the plantation.

He was given a royal welcome by the colonel and by Miss Fannie as well, who looked upon Dick almost as if he were her brother. The "Liberty Boys" were glad to see Dick, but were sorry to learn that the expedition had been abandoned.

"That is too bad!" said Bob Estabrook, disconsolately; "I wanted to go down to St. Augustine and help teach those redcoats a lesson."

The other "Liberty Boys" said the same. They were very much disappointed, but it could not be helped—and then they came to think of it they had not done so badly, for while Dick was gone up to Savannah, and was coming back with Howe's force, the youths had made several trips out into the surrounding country and had killed a large number of Indians and had practically exterminated two bands of redcoats that had been encountered.

One attack was made on the plantation by the Indians

and by some redcoats, but they had been repulsed, and no other attack was made.

There was work to be done elsewhere, however, and the "Liberty Boys" bade good-by to the colonel and his beautiful daughter, and rode northward into Georgia, where they had some lively adventures.

THE END.

The next number (82) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS AND THE GEORGIA GIANT; OR, A HARD MAN TO HANDLE," by Harry Moore.

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